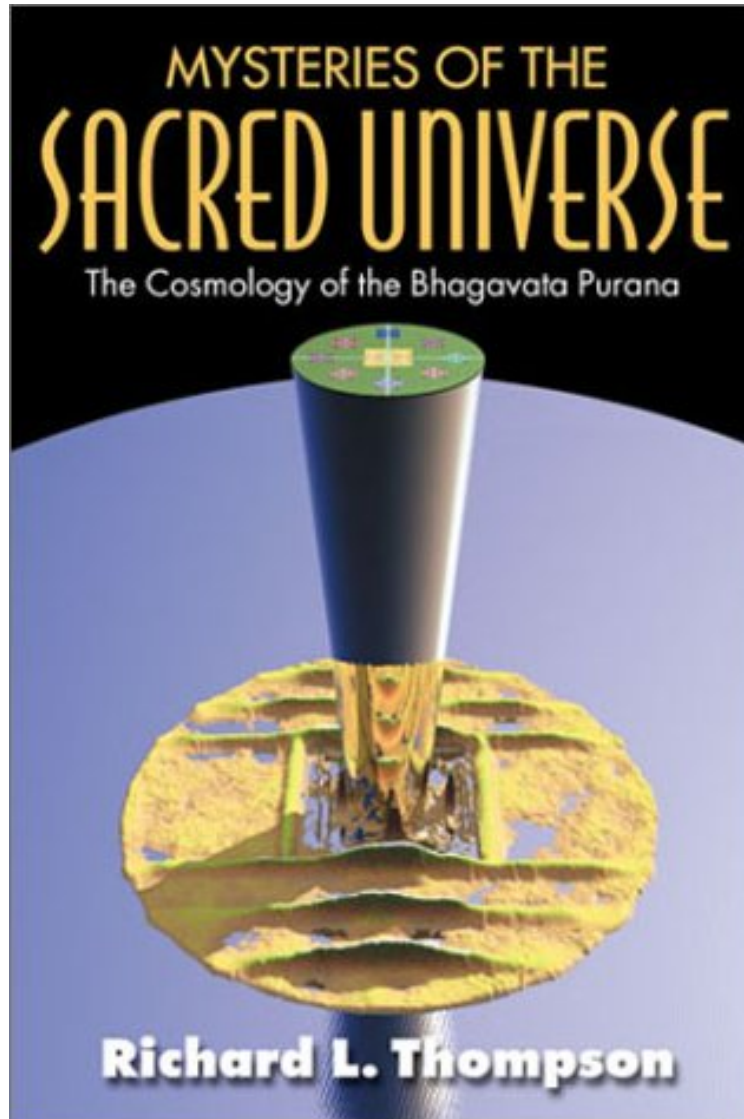


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## Mysteries of the Sacred Universe

*Richard L. Thompson*

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#2278523 in Books Govardhan Hill Pub 2000-11-20Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.00 x 6.00 x 1.00l,  
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**Richard L. Thompson : Mysteries of the Sacred Universe** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Mysteries of the Sacred Universe:

22 of 22 people found the following review helpful. Excellent work!By Harold McFarlandSimply stated, this book was not at all what I had expected. It far exceeded my expectations. I had expected another treatise on the mythology and belief systems of Puranic literature mixed with some way of tying it to today's understanding of life and the cosmos. Instead it was a very scholarly work that delved into the knowledge of ancient India and how it was expressed

in terms of mythology. The author's interpretation of this mythology brings it into focus and ties it to what we have learned in the field of modern astronomy. Instead of viewing the Puranic literature as being composed by those who were less knowledgeable and limited in their understanding and superstitious in their ways, his interpretations shows that they had a very advanced understanding of the universe around them. A little complex and confusing at times, it required rereading of several sections before I really understood how they were tied together. Not a work that I would recommend to a new-comer to the Puranic literature but a highly recommended volume to anyone with an intermediate knowledge. 12 of 12 people found the following review helpful. A thoroughly well-balanced study: convincing, gripping material for those with devotional as well as academic interests

By Vik Ramsoondur

The cosmological system described in the Fifth Canto of the Bhagavata Purana, or Srimad Bhagavatam (or simply Bhagavatam) as it is also known, has been a source of confusion to Indian and non-Indian thinkers alike for many hundreds of years, and this bewilderment goes back to well before Western thought had had the opportunity to exert a significant influence on India's intellectuals. Whilst many theories and counter-theories have been written on the uselessness or validity of the astronomical and other information contained in the Bhagavata, to me, the work of the late Sadaputa dasa (Richard Leslie Thompson (1947 - 2008)) remains, to date, the most convincing and scholarly position ever developed on this whole subject matter. That I myself share a broad sliver of Dr. Thompson's metaphysical susceptibilities matters little in the end, for, in my estimation, it is axiomatic that credit should be given where it is due. And Sadaputa was one man who, rather uncannily, combined and exemplified the sympathising sensibilities of a devotional practitioner side by side with the rigorous scepticism of a professional mathematician, both of which he, of course, was. During the course of his productive years, Sadaputa dasa published two books on Hindu cosmology: (i) Vedic Cosmography and Astronomy, and (ii) Mysteries of the Sacred Universe: The Cosmology of the Bhagavata Purana. I own copies of both these works and have read each more than once; without hesitation, I would recommend them to anybody interested in this fascinating theme. In Mysteries..., which came out more than a decade after the first of the two releases, Thompson postulates a fundamentally cogent and soundly developed thesis which in broad strokes goes as follows - in the 5th Canto, Vedavyasa (the traditionally held author/editor of the composition) describes the universe by resorting to the use of a composite structure, in which different elements depict a number of possible models. This is indeed in line with something that Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (a 15th/16th century Bengali mystic saint, accepted by his followers as a divine descent of Krishna/Narayana, the Godhead in the theology of Vaishnavism, India's most developed and widespread form of theism) is understood to have said, namely that in practically each and every verse of scripture, several valuable, and occasionally conflicting, meanings can be extrapolated. After over two decades of sustained academic research dovetailed with religious practice, Sadaputa posits in Mysteries... that the cosmology of the Bhagavatam, properly grasped, is actually a sophisticated astronomical framework amenable to at least four major interpretations, all of which, in his analysis, maintain the sanctity and sacredness of the text as a whole, while at the same time preserving the informative value of the fifth book of this famed Purana. These are: 1. a polar projection map of the earth globe; 2. an accurate map of the solar system as determined from a geocentric point of view; 3. a topographical map of a large region of South and South Central Asia; and, 4. a map of the otherworldly realm of the Rishis, Devas, Upadevas and other putative superhuman, subtly-embodied celestial beings described in the various Vedic/Hindu literatures. Now, some have come down hard on Sadaputa/Thompson for "daring" to interpret the Sanskrit of the Bhagavata rather than, in a fashion similar to what they themselves have adopted, accepting a bland, sterile literal rendering of the relevant passages. For my part, I would enjoin those seriously interested to earnestly study this particular book, and discover at first hand what a committed metaphysician and no-nonsense academician Sadaputa was. In any event, one would be hard-pressed to find somebody simultaneously well-educated in the modern scientific method and adequately acquainted with the Vedic worldview, to have devoted half as much time, effort and energy in comprehending Puranic astronomy and cosmology, as he has - logically, deferring to his findings and understanding, if only in part, constitutes a rational course of action. Evidently, in the absolute sense, knowing reality, in the fullest manifestation of it, amounts to nothing less than a mammoth task and the tallest of orders. True to the dramatic intellectual honesty that was his trademark, Thompson does not fail to impress upon his readers that while his research likely approximates the meaning that Vedavyasa may have originally intended when tradition claims he was penning the Bhagavata, ultimately, the cosmos, being essentially limitless, is largely indescribable, particularly from our earthly vantage point; one of the imports of this basic stance would be that it would amount to sheer naiveté to expect anything much more advanced and detailed than a general, not to say rudimentary, depiction of the configuration of select astral bodies in the firmament, in some antique, mystically-oriented poem of the Bhagavata Purana's genre. 6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Mysteries of the Sacred Universe

By Eva Victoria Tame

Mysteries of the Sacred Universe is a book for lovers of the arcane, long-forgotten or unknown past history and/or myth. But not only - as the author is a mathematician with a Ph.D. in theory of probability - he takes us, the readers, for a breathless ride with a no-nonsense driver, firmly established and most comfortable in the field of logic, reason, theoretical scientific thinking and sound research. If this is not enough and we crave the drama and theater of this vast and baffling universe - be ready for multiple quaint stories. Like with all mysteries - flying machines with wooden wings and automatic door openers designed and built in 6 000 B.C., if not

before, might amuse one, startle another - amaze some? We have had it all before - no scientific enigmas here. The author's mind most acutely yet humbly and with just the right dose of reverence addresses the timeless universe and its historical and cyclical repeatability. Short of telling us how and where the continuity came from - the reader is elegantly dispatched on a solitary mission of further research and personal confirmation of the author's detailed findings. Where is one to turn if not in search of the arcane schools of the ancient past, as R. Thompson leaves no stone unturned in his serious and orderly presentation of available data. If you are an avid seeker for and/or feel at home in the elusive world of akasha - don't forget to pack a copy of *Mysteries of the Sacred Universe* for your trip, as well as "A Dweller on Two Planets" by Phylos the Thibetan and E.C. Prophet's "The Lost Years of Jesus" - happy trails and hold onto your hats, as you will surely need several . . . Eva Victoria Tame, [...]

Although classical texts often have outmoded unscientific cosmologies, India's Bhagavata Purana, upon closer examination, reveals a sophisticated cosmological system containing multiple levels of meaning that encode at least four different astronomical, geographical, and spiritual world models.

Gripping, scholarly and groundbreaking, *Mysteries of the Sacred Universe* deserves to be widely read and discussed. -- Robert Bauval, coauthor of *The Orion Mystery* and *The Mystery of the Sphinx* Overturns a long history of scholarly undervaluation of the supposedly "only mythological" contents of ancient India's Puranic literature. -- Professor Gene Thursby of University of Florida Thompson presents a compelling case showing Puranic cosmology was intended to have multiple meanings spanning terrestrial, astronomical, and spiritual planes. -- Professor Subash Kak, Louisiana State University About the Author Richard L. Thompson was born in Binghamton, New York, in 1947. In 1974 he received his Ph. D. in mathematics from Cornell University, where he specialized in probability theory and statistical mechanics. Dr. Thompson has done scientific research in quantum physics, mathematical biology, and remote sensing. He has extensively investigated ancient Indian astronomy, cosmology, and spirituality, and he has developed multimedia expositions on these topics. He is the author of six books on topics ranging from consciousness to archeology and ancient astronomy.