



Book Review

Genome to Om: Evolving Journey of Modern Science to Meta-Science. Authored by Drs. Bhushan Patwardhan and Indu Ramchandani. Published by BluOne Ink, India; 2024, pp 449. Price Rs 799 (hardcover), ISBN: 978-93-6547-823-5.

This scholarly non-fiction book is a pioneering work that dares to traverse the often-polarized domains of science and spirituality. While reading *Genome to Om*, I often felt as if I was reading my own thoughts. Twenty-six esteemed voices from academia and science have offered their reflections, echoing the unity explored in its pages. Among them, Dr. K. Kasturirangan, former Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), praised the work for its visionary integration of modern science and ancient wisdom. Dr. Vikas P. Sukhatme, Dean of Emory University School of Medicine, highlighted the book's innovative perspectives on health and genomics. Additionally, Dr. H. R. Nagendra, Chancellor of S-VYASA University, lauded its insightful discussion on the scientific foundations of yoga and its integration into a holistic framework for well-being.

At its core, the book proposes an integrative framework connecting genomic research with the expansive philosophy of the Vedic traditions, particularly the concept of Om. As the authors explain, “Genome and Om are metaphors. This connection between Genome and Om extends to understanding the universe and life at both levels, the cosmic and the atomic.” The authors envision a transformative era that requires “a concerted global effort that prioritizes empathy and environmental consciousness to address pressing challenges like climate change and to foster “meta-societies” where sustainable practices and mindful consumption become the norm.

The book draws from various disciplines, including frontiers of modern science, genomics, artificial intelligence, quantum physics, Ayurveda, Yoga and philosophy, interweaving them to construct a holistic understanding of existence. It seeks to address fundamental questions: Who are we? Why are we here? Where are we headed? The book “Spirience”¹ complements these inquiries by exploring how integrating spiritual and scientific paradigms can lead to a life of harmony, purpose, and fulfillment.

A Timely Presentation

The premise of *Genome to Om* is particularly timely, given the existential challenges humanity faces in the Anthropocene epoch. The book emphasizes that while reductionist science has greatly advanced our understanding, it often “misses the context of the whole.” To navigate the complexities of this epoch, the authors advocate for a meta-scientific approach that blends modern innovation with the holistic insights of ancient wisdom. *Genome to Om* challenges conventional boundaries and offers an inspiring roadmap for personal and societal transformation.

Summary of Key Themes

The book explores the intersection of the tangible and the transcendent, seamlessly bridging the empirical precision of modern science with the intuitive depth of spirituality. Drawing on ancient Vedic wisdom—embodied in the concept of Om—it presents a universal framework for understanding consciousness, ethics, and reality. The authors advocate for a more holistic understanding of existence by integrating science and spirituality.

The Omcene Epoch and Meta-Science

One of the book's most compelling propositions is the introduction of the Omcene epoch—a future era characterized by universal well-being, unity in diversity, and sustainable development. The authors envision a global meta-society where scientific advancements, such as artificial intelligence and genomics, are guided by ethical and spiritual principles. The epoch challenges the existing anthropocentric worldview, advocating for a paradigm shift that celebrates interconnectedness and shared responsibilities across nations and ecosystems. Rooted in the ancient Sanskrit vision of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*—“the world is one family”—this framework offers a blueprint for addressing modern crises, from climate change to social inequality.

The book proposes a transformative evolution of science into meta-science, a domain that transcends conventional empiricism. “Meta-science is the science that studies science, a deeper exploration of the truth as a direct experience, transcending the boundaries of conventional science and metaphysics.” It incorporates ethical insights, intuitive knowledge, and philosophical

inquiry alongside empirical research. Drawing from Upanishadic statements like *Prajnanam Brahma*, the book advocates for a science that seeks to understand both the mechanics of nature and its underlying essence.

The Multifaceted Nature of Life

Exploring the synergy between science and spirituality extends into a profound discussion of the nature of life, blending insights from biology, sociology, and spirituality. The authors acknowledge that while modern science has made remarkable strides in understanding biological mechanisms like DNA and metabolism, it often overlooks the deeper existential and philosophical aspects of life.

They highlight the biological dimension as encompassing fundamental processes such as growth, adaptation, and organization, while the social dimension focuses on human connections, cultural practices, and societal norms. The spiritual dimension emphasizes the search for purpose and connection with universal consciousness. The book underscores the need for a comprehensive approach, which merges scientific inquiry with philosophical and spiritual reflection.

Mind, Body, and Soul

The book investigates the interplay of mind, body, and soul, illustrating their importance in fostering a unified perspective on existence. It highlights the intricate relationship between the brain and the mind, noting that while the brain serves as the biological foundation for cognitive processes, the mind transcends its physical structures, encompassing thought, emotion, and self-awareness. Consciousness is depicted as the essence of human experience, examined through both scientific and philosophical perspectives.

Drawing from Eastern traditions, the book proposes that consciousness is not merely a by-product of neural activity but a fundamental aspect of reality itself, identified as *ātman*. It explains, “The *ātman* is not the body, not the mind, not the senses, not the ego, or the social role; rather, it is the essence of our being, the pure consciousness, the unchanging witness.” The text synthesizes these perspectives to reinforce the *ātman* as the unchanging essence of being, aligning ancient spiritual wisdom with contemporary scientific discovery.

Meaning, Mortality, and the Cycle of Existence

The book delves into the profound questions of human existence and mortality. It clarifies that “self-realization is the purpose of life” and explores how meaning emerges through aligning one’s values, passions, and aspirations. Humanity’s evolutionary trajectory is examined, suggesting that our ultimate purpose lies in personal growth, societal contribution, and deepening our understanding of existence.

Similarly, it portrays death as a transition rather than an end, emphasizing that “if there is birth, there is death”. This perspective invites a deeper understanding of life and mortality, encouraging a more accepting and peaceful approach to life’s ultimate certainty.

A Catalyst for Future Inquiry

Genome to Om’s innovative approach integrates modern scientific research with profound Vedic insights, offering a holistic framework for understanding existence. It addresses pressing global issues such as artificial intelligence, sustainability, and genomics—topics that resonate deeply in today’s world. The authors’ exploration of consciousness as a unifying principle and their advocacy for ethical science challenge readers to reconsider the purpose and direction of scientific inquiry.

The book opens avenues for interdisciplinary discourse and research by merging empirical methodology with diverse epistemological frameworks. The visionary concept of the Omcene epoch invites further investigation into its practical implementation within existing societal paradigms. As humanity stands at the threshold of unprecedented scientific advancements, *Genome to Om* reminds us that our greatest discoveries may lie not in separating science and spirituality but in their synthesis. Through this integration, we may unlock the wisdom needed to navigate our complex present and create a more conscious, harmonious future.

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Reference

- i. Spiriience: Experiencing Peace and Prosperity through Spirituality and Science. Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami, V.I. Lakshmanan, S. Kalyanasundaram. Tell well Talent India, 2024.