

S. L. Dhani, *Politics of Gods: Churning of the Ocean*, D. D. Books, Panchkula, Haryana, 1984, pp. 350 Rs. 150/-.

The book is a scientific analysis of the story of *Samudramathana*, a famous myth or legend known to every Hindu. It is referred to in quite a few *puranas* but a detailed account is available in *matsya purana*. It is the story of the joint effort of gods and demons to churn the ocean at the dawn of creation. Among other things they churned out Sun, Moon, Lakshmi, poison, *amrita* (nectar) etc. Lord Vishnu distributed *amrita* only amongst gods. Rahu, a demon had, however, sneaked himself into god's queue and took *amrita*. Lord Vishnu beheaded Rahu at the instance of Sun and Moon, and the beheaded body became the demon Ketu. As a revenge for this punishment, they cause eclipses to Sun and Moon.

The story is explained in twelve chapters in two parts. The author explains that this myth is a symbolic representation of, *inter alia*, Aryan conquest over non-Aryans which later became the basis of religious and political philosophy of India. The minority, surrounded by the hostile majority of the non-Aryans, through clever strategems manoeuvred to grab the control of the entire natural wealth and religious, political and social power, and subjected their opponents to all kinds of exploitation, systematic persecution, and denials. In the author's view, this story is an example of how a determined group can seize power and hold it permanently through a skilfully planned and dexterously implemented strategy.