

Divine botany-universal and useful but under explored traditions

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The study of all relationships between man and plant based on faith, belief and tradition concerning gods, goddesses, saints & other such powers can be called Divine botany. There are three aspects; the knowledge and information contained in the ancient religious books and epics of various faiths; the beliefs and practices as presently observed or performed among various ethnic group, and the future prospects and possibility in this area of botany. The paper has a brief account of faith related to plant in epics like *Ramayan* and *Mahabharat*, in religious scriptures like *Bible* and *Quran* & plants associated with planets, stars, *Vastu-shastra*, practices relating to plants in worship and decoration of deities, taboos and plants in various ceremonies, festivals and rites from birth to death. It is discussed that such a faith belief and practice have scientific basis and is helpful for good health and preservation of biodiversity. It is also suggested that the subject is not static but due to changes in biodiversity, human attitude to tradition and introduction of many exotics in various parts of the world, there is dynamism in this relationship. The future prospects and immense possibilities of the subject are indicated.

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Human relationships with plant kingdom are very intense, vast and multifarious. They can be put in two very broad categories, the material and the cultural. The material relationships include plants for food, fodder, drugs, fuel, fibres, dyes, gums, house building, tools, numerous articles of daily life that is all economic plants and also the environmental concerns. This is usually common knowledge. The cultural relationships include plants associated with faith and tradition and also plants in fine arts and literature like painting, music, songs, legends, proverbs, poetry, sculptures and body ornamentation. This aspect of our relationships with plant kingdom is less familiar and under explored. The subject is very vast; presently only a glimpse is being provided with special reference to the Indian scenario. The study of plants, plant products and plant formations (such as forests and groves) associated with faith and tradition forms the discipline of Divine botany. The origin of such divine or spiritual relationship between man and plants will probably date back to the origin of human race. Some evidences of those early or ancient relationships are available even today in scriptures of all faiths, and in carvings. Excavations carried out at Mehargarh (Pakistan) pinpoint the beginnings of

civilization in India and have shown that the worshipping of trees, putting of *swastika* symbol at the entrance and similar other practices were common feature of the civilization. Some studies have been done on this aspect in India and also other regions of the world¹⁻⁵.

Work has also been published on plants of *Ramayana*, other epics and Jain scriptures. Buddhist literature suggests that Lord Buddha spent 4 weeks in meditation under *Pipal* (*Ficus religiosa* L.), *Banyan* (*Ficus bengalensis* L.), *Chironji* (*Buchanania lanzan*) and *Ingar* (*Barringtonia acutangula* Gaertn.) trees. Also, that he covered his body with the grass *Munj* (*Saccharum bengalense* Retz.) so as to protect from evil effects of unholy persons. *Munj* was also the grass from which sacred thread of Lord *Hanuman* was made. In Hindu faith, a curse by *Parvati* turned *Vishnu*, *Shankara* and *Brahma* into *Pipal*, *banyan*, *Palash* [*Butea monosperma* (Lamk.) Taub.], and these trees became abodes of these Lords. Two species of *Ficus* growing along with *Pakar* are also called *Harishankari*. Lord *Rama* along with *Sita* spent many years of their life in forest under the shade of trees, called *Panchvati*. The word is interpreted in various ways, eg. grove of 5 banyan trees, trees of banyan, *pipal*, *bel* [*Aegle marmelos* (L.) Corr.], *aonla* (*Phyllanthus emblica* L.) and *ashoka* [*Saraca asoca*

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(Roxb.) De Willd.]. The position of trees in four direction North, South, East and West are specified for larger *Panchwati*. *Ashok* tree is associated with Lord Rama's consort, *Sita*, during her stay in Sri Lanka. Lotus (*Nelumbo nucifera* Gaertn.) is considered as seat of many god and goddesses in Hindu faith.

In Jain faith, 24 plants are associated with salvation of 24 Jain Tirthankaras (Table 1). In Buddhism, Lord Buddha spent long periods in *sal* (*Shorea robusta* Gaertn.f.) forest. He attained salvation under *pipal*, but then spent time under banyan trees, seventh week under *khirni* [*Manilkara hexandra* (Roxb.) Dubard] tree. His first *samadhi* was made under *jamun* [*Syzygium cumini* (L.) Skeels] tree. He preached under *pakar* trees. Some Buddha groves exist where trees of mango, palms, pine and bamboos grow. Pagoda tree (*Plumeria acutifolia* Poir.) flowers are offered in Buddhist temples. In *Guru-Granth Saheb*, trees are said to be gods and this universe as branches of trees. Certain trees have become inseparably associated with many sacred places, like *pipal* of Nanakmata, soap nut (*Sapindus emarginatus* Vahl) of Haldwani, *shisham* of Santokhsar and *jujub* (*Ber*) of Harminder Saheb near Sialkot. In Islamic faith, date-palm, (*Phoenix dactylifera* L.) Olive (*Olea europea* L.), grapes (*Vitis vinifera* L.), pomegranate, henna (*Lawsonia alba* L.), *jujub* (*Ziziphus mauritiana* Lam.), *pilu* (*Salvadhra oleoides* Decne.), *kikar*, *jhau* (*Tamarix ericoides* Rottl.) and *mann* (*Alhagi maurorum* Desv.) figure significantly in *Quran*. The main plants referred frequently in bible are date palm, fig (*Ficus carica* L.), pomegranate, Poplar (*Populus spp.*), *pilu*, grapes, henna, *Nal* (*Arundo donax* L.), elephant grass (*Typha angustata* Bory & Chamb), *ghritkumari* (*Aloe vera* Tourn.ex L.), castor (*Ricinus communis* L.), mulberry (*Morus nigra* L.), and *jhau*.

Plants in literature, like in devotional songs, legends relating to gods, goddesses, deities and saints have also been studied. The notable carvings and paintings at places of worship, temples, churches, mosques and monasteries as also rich carvings like in Ajanta-Ellora have been studied⁶. Certain seeds, such as of *Rudraksha* (*Elaeocarpus ganitrus* Roxb.), and wood of sandal wood tree (*Santalum album* L.) & sacred basil (*Ocimum sanctum* L.) are used for making beads for sacred garlands and rosaries.

Study of divine plants

There are several possible approaches to the study of divine plants. One is to study and understand plants

Table 1—Plants associated with salvation of 24 Jain Tirthankars

Name of Tirthankara	Plant
Adinath	Banyan
Ajitnath	Saptaparni
Sambhawnath	Sal
Abhinandannath	Cheer
Sumatnath	Priyangu (<i>Calicarpa macrophyya</i> Vahl.)
Padamnath	Priyangu (<i>Calicarpa macrophyya</i> Vahl.)
Suparshvnath	Siris (<i>Albizia lebbek</i> Benth.)
Chandranath	Naagkesar
Pushpadantnath	Bahera (<i>Terminalia bellirica</i> Roxb.)
Sheetalnath	Bel
Shriyansnath	Tendu (<i>Diospyros peregrina</i> (Gaertn.) Gurke)
Vasupujnath	Kadam
Vimalnath	Jamun
Anantnath	Pipal
Dharmnath	Kaitha
Shantinath	Tuna (<i>Cedrella toona</i> Roxb.)
Kunthnath	Tilak
Arahnath	Mango
Mallinath	Ashok
Munisubratnath	Champa
Naminath	Maulshiri
Neminath	Bamboos
Parshwanath	Deodar (<i>Cedrus deodara</i> (Roxb.) Loud.)
Mahaveernath	Sal

in faith and belief from birth to death of human beings, which is possibly the anthropological approach. This is to study plants from supernatural and spiritual level down to worldly or mundane level associated from birth to death. Associating plants with spiritual or supernatural phenomena is not only Indian or oriental thought⁷. Spiritual or mystic aspects of divine botany will include the following kinds of faith and beliefs relating to plants: plants believed to establish communication with spirits eg. *Datura* (*Datura spp.*), cannabis (*Cannabis sativa* L.), opium, *Soma* (*Amanita muscaria*) and many other psychoactive plants. Most Shamanic practices, which are recorded from many so-called underdeveloped or undeveloped regions of the world, revolve round such plants⁸⁻⁹. Some plants are believed to have originated from part of body or tears of gods; for instance *Pipal* from body of *Vishnu*, *Palash* from body of *Brahma*, and *Aonla* from tears of *Brahma*. Plants are believed to be abodes of spirits and souls of the dead, eg. *Saptaparni* tree (*Alstonia scholaris* R.Br.), *Lodhas* in West Bengal plant this tree on burial/cremation grounds so that souls of their dead ancestors may rest on it. *Aonla*, marking nut tree (*Semecarpus anacardium* L.f.), *kikar* (*Acacia nilotica* L.), *apamarg* (*Achyranthes aspera* L.), and *harmal*

(*Peganum harmala* L.) are believed to keep evil spirits away. *Tantra* is a special, rather mysterious process practiced by some hermits¹⁰. It is believed that certain plants possess special energies. Through practice, concentration and/ or meditation some claim to succeed in acquiring special energy or powers. The procedures for these involve study of stars and planets of a particular person at the time of birth, collection of plant at particular time and season and other associated rites. Some orchids such as *Salib mishree* (*Dactylorhiza hatagirea* (Don) Soo) are associated with such processes. *Vanda* (*Vanda tessellata* Loud.) growing on specific trees is associated for particular purposes like on *pipal* for wealth, on *mahua* [*Madhuca longifolia* (Koen.) Mc. Br.] for body vigour, on mango tree for love in family and to keep evil spirits away.

Next is an important group of divine plants under the category celestial plants. These plants are believed to be associated with constellations (*Nakshatras*) and planets (*Graha*). Sun, stars and planets also emit energy, which influence not only human beings but also plants. Certain plants draw more energy than others from these celestial bodies, and so are associated with them. The Zodiac (*Saur Mandal*) has been divided into 27 constellations. A plant Represents each planet and each constellation (Tables 2,3)¹¹.

All people are born in one or the other constellation. It is believed that the particular plant of one's constellation should be planted, watered cared for and conserved by him. Any product from that species should not be used in medicine or for any other purpose. There have been some studies on trees preferred for planting in religious places. *Pipal* (*Bodhi*) tree is well known for Buddhist temples. There are references regarding particular woods for use in building places of worship. Many plants are associated with worship, offering or decoration on or ornamentation of statues of various gods, goddesses and saints. Some notable examples for use in worship are coconut (*Cocos nucifera* L.), rice (akshat) (*Oryza sativa* L.), cloves (Lavang) (*Syzygium aromaticum* L.), almonds (*Prunus amygdalus* Bat.), betel nut, betel leaf (*Piper betle* L.) and several fruits and flowers. There are several specific preferences for flowers to particular deities. In *Vedic* culture, an elaborate system of rituals was devised to propitiate the gods so that the next birth be full of happiness and peace or even to attain salvation. In many rituals, various plant or plant parts play a very significant role as symbol of gods or as being devoted or addressed to gods.

Plants associated with deities as *pancha-deva*

A detailed account of these is available in various Indian treatises¹². Lord *Ganesh* is worshipped first in every *Hindu* religious ceremony, religious homage, or performance of rites associated with adoration and reverence to the divine or even in auspicious social activities. If idol of *Ganesh* is not available, then a *swastika* symbol is drawn if possible by saffron or *kesar* (*Crocus sativus* L.) or by a red paste on a betel-nut or *supari* (*Areca catechu* L.), and that seated on a small heap of rice sometimes placed on a betel-leaf, serves as a symbol of the deity. *Ganesh* is worshipped with *Doob* grass; for this purpose the stem top with 3 or 5 leaves is taken. Besides, white flowers are also offered, however sacred basil (leaves and inflorescence both) is prohibited. The goddess especially loves *Apamarg*. Besides, all fragrant white flowers like *Bela* and *Chameli* (*Jasminum* spp.) and all red flowers are used for worshipping. The prohibited ones are *Doob*, *Tilak* (*Wendlandia exserta* DC.), sacred basil, *tej-pat* (*Cinnamomum tamala* Nees & Eberm.). Lord *Vishnu* loves the sacred basil most; upper leaves with inflorescence (*manjari*) are offered. Being the most sacred plant it is planted in every *Hindu* home. Flowers and fruits of lotus, *Maulsiri* (*Mimusops elengi* L.), *Ashok*, *Harsingar* (*Nyctanthes arbor-tristis* L.), *Tagar* (*Valeriana hardwickii* Wall.), *Bel*, *Kadamb* [*Anthocephalus chinensis* (Lamk.) Rich. ex Walp.], *Champa* (*Michelia champaca* L.), clove and *Katki* are also offered to lord *Vishnu*, while flowers of *Madar*, *Datura*, *Kachnar* (*Bauhinia variegata* L.), *banyan*, *Gular*, *Pakar* (*Ficus lacor* Buch. -Ham.), and *Kaner* (*Nerium indicum* Mill.) are prohibited. All flowers, which are offered to *Vishnu* except *Katki*, are recommended for worshipping the deity. *Aak* (*Calotropis procera* Br.), *datura* that are prohibited in case of *Vishnu* are offered to lord *Shiva*. *Bela*, *Kush*, *Patla* (*Ptereospermum suaveolens* DC.), *Kaner*, *Ashok*, *Tilak*, *Lodh*, lotus, *Maulsiri*, *Palash* are offered to the deity, while *Gunja* (*Abrus precatorius* L.), *Datura*, *Aparajita* (*Clitoria ternatea* L.) and *Tagar* are prohibited. It may be appreciated that all flowers and other parts may not be available at all times.

Popular traditions / rites

During the fieldwork spread over 4 decades, numerous instances of faith and belief related to plants were observed and recorded. In most of *Hindu* homes one or more of the following rites can be easily witnessed: planting sacred basil in courtyard, applying

Table 2—Association of planets and plants

Planets	Plants
<i>Surya</i> (Sun)	<i>Madar</i> (<i>Calotropis gigantea</i> (L.) Br. ex Ait)
<i>Chandrama</i> (Moon)	<i>Palash</i>
<i>Mangal</i> (Mars)	<i>Khair</i> (<i>Acacia catechu</i> Willd.)
<i>Budh</i> (Mercury)	<i>Apamarg</i>
<i>Brahaspati</i> (Jupiter)	<i>Pipal</i>
<i>Shukra</i> (Venus)	<i>Gular</i> (<i>Ficus racemosa</i> L.)
<i>Shani</i> (Saturn)	<i>Shami</i> (<i>Prosopis cineraria</i> L.) Druce.)
<i>Rahu</i> (Dragon's head)	<i>Dub</i> (<i>Durva</i>) (<i>Cynodon dactylon</i> Pers.)
<i>Ketu</i> (Dragon's Tail)	<i>Kush</i> (<i>Desmostachya bipinnata</i> (Stapf) Beauv.)

Table 3—Plants associated with 27 constellations

Constellation	Plant
Ashwani (Beta Arietis)	Kuchela (<i>Strychnos nux-vomica</i> L.)
Bharani (41 Arietus)	Amla
Kratika (Etatauri Alcyone-2)	Gular
Rohini (Aldebaran)	Jamun
Mrig-shira (Lambda orionis)	Khair
Ardra (Gamma)	Shesham (<i>Dalbergia sisoo</i> Roxb.)
Punarvasu (Beta Geminorium pollux)	Bamboo (Various spp.)
Pushya	(Delta Cancri) Peepal
Ashlesha (Zeta Hydare)	Nagkesar (<i>Mesua nagassarium</i> (Burm.f.) Kost.)
Magha (Regulus/Roleonis)	Banyan
Poorva Phalguni (Delta Leonis)	Palash
Uttar Phalguni (Denebala)	Pakar
Hast (Delta Corvi)	Soap nut
Chitra (Virginis spica)	Ber
Swati (Alpha Bootis/Arcturus)	Arjun
Vishakha (Alpha Librae)	Katai (<i>Bilangra</i> (<i>Flacourtia ramontchi</i> L'Herit)
Anuradha (Delta Scorpii)	Maulshri
Jyeshtha (Antares)	Cheer (<i>Pinus roxbughii</i> Sarg.)
Mula (Lambada Scorpi)	Sal
Purvashadha (Delta sagittarii)	Jalmala (<i>Salix tetrasperma</i> Roxb.)
Uttarashadha (Sigma sagittavivi)	Kathal (<i>Artocarpus heterophyllus</i> Lamk.)
Shravana (Alpho Aquila/Altair)	Madar
Ghanishtha (Beta Dalphini)	Shami
Shatabhisha (Lambada Aquarii)	Kadam
Poorva Bhadrpada(Beta pegasi/Markab)	Aam
Uttara Bhadrpada (Gamma Pegasi/Algenib)	Neem (<i>Azadirachta indica</i> Juss.)
Revati (Zeta piscium)	Mahua

sandalwood paste on forehead, applying turmeric paste and rice as a *tilak* or *bindi* on forehead, offering coconut to relatives at the time of departure, tying

twigs of mango in a string and placing it at the main door of the house, placing new leaves of barley (*Hordeum vulgare* L.) on the ear during *Dusshera*, burning of incense (like *guggul*) before deities, breaking of coconut before the deities, offering betel leaves and nuts to visitors, and placing sacred basil leaf in the mouth of the dead.

Plants associated with festivals and social activities

A large number of plants are associated with religious festivals like *Durga Puja*, *Ganesh Chaturthi*, *Christmas*, *Ramzan*, *Yagyas* and *Havans*¹³. Festivals of all faiths, various tribal or other ethnic groups provide abundant material for understanding the basis and criteria for using specific plants, and their impact on conservation. Associated with religious festivals is the social dimension of such activities, such as community dances, feasting, fasting and fairs. Plants used for wearing on body in headgear, or hairdo and in body ornamentation too have acquired the status of sacred. A few examples are, *Jasminum* spp, turmeric (*Curcuma longa* L.), sandalwood tree, orchid (*Rhynchostylis retusa* Blume), *Crossandra* [*Crossandra infundibuliformis* (L.) Nees.], mango (*Mangifera indica* L.), marigold (*Tagetes erecta* L.). Among *Gonds*, a twig of *Apamarg* kept on the roof of the dwelling facilitates birth. *Bach* (*Acorus calamus* L.) root is an essential ingredient of paste put on the tongue of the newborn, in many parts of India. Several dozen plants are associated with *Hindu* marriage, e.g. mango twigs, plantain, betel-leaf, sacred basil, *munj* stems, coconut, *doob*, turmeric, betel nut, rice and barley. Among different ethnic groups, cremation rites have been associated with specific plants. These are in addition to ingredients used for *Havan* or other rites. In many tribal societies, names of clans are based on some ancestral association with certain plants. The folk of the clan worship and protect that species as one of their elders¹⁴.

Divine medicinal plants

The large category of divine plants is based on the faith that ancient wise sages had discovered special curative properties bestowed by the creator to some plants for welfare of mankind, and several known medicinal applications are due to these gifts of God. *Harar* (*Terminalia chebula* Retz.) is medicinal; *doob*, *kaitha* and *Jamun* associated with Lord *Ganesh* are antidiabetic; *sada-bahar* (*Catharanthus roseus* (L.) Don.), planted around religious places is effective in

leukaemia. Many such plants are seen in places of worship.

Plants in Vastu shastra

Certain plants associated with *Vastu Shastra*, are believed to be auspicious or inauspicious near dwellings or in particular locations. Banyan is considered lucky if planted in east of the house but unlucky if planted in the west; *gular* is auspicious in South of the house and inauspicious in North; *pipal* is auspicious in West of the house but inauspicious in East. *Arjun* (*Terminalia arjuna* Wight & Arn.) and *maulshri* are considered to be inauspicious if growing near dwellings, while *neem* is believed to keep ill luck away, so it is planted near dwellings.

Magico-religious beliefs

Certain beliefs of the people have been given religious touch to make them easily acceptable and popular. These beliefs relate to luck, health, prosperity, good harvest, easy childbirth and such other facts of human life. Some plants are believed to possess energies to enable people to profess or forecast events. A *tilak* on forehead or application in eyes as eye salve, e.g. *Ud-salap* (*Paeonia emodi* Wall. Ex Royle) and *malkangni* (*Celastrus paniculatus* Willd.) gives such power. Chewing *Apamarg* roots for 12 yrs gives power that anything spoken comes true. Among *Gonds*, *Tikhur* (*Curcuma angustifolia* Roxb.) is eaten on days of fast while *Ramdana* (*Amaranthus caudatus* L.), *makhana* (*Euryale ferox* Salisb.), *kutu* (*Fagopyrum esculantum* Moench.), and water chestnut (*Trapa natans* L.) are eaten in rural and urban places.

Conservation aspects

Many such beliefs lead to regulated exploitation and promote conservation. Tubers of *Turhur* (*Dioscorea glabra* Roxb.) are believed to be the food of rain Gods and digging them till the end of rains is a taboo among the Andamanese. *Lodhas* of West Bengal believe *Bhut raj* [*Lygodium flexuosum* (L.) Sw.] to be abode of Gods. In Assam, only mature rhizomes of tree fern [*Angiopteris evecta* (Forst.) Hoffm.] are allowed to be dug for eating. *Gonds* in Central India use wood of only fallen branches of *Chironji* for making the violin like musical instrument called, *Kikir*. Felling a tree or cutting a branch is not allowed. For edible fruit bearing trees, plucking only ripe fruits is allowed among several ethnic groups, eg. plantain (*Musa balbisiana* Colla) in Assam, mango among *Gonds* in Central India. *Santhals* do not allow

cutting of a sal tree except on a full moon day and plucking fruits of jujube before March/April, i.e. till full seed setting for dispersal and prospect of regeneration. They also do not uproot *Sankhapushpi* plant till seed setting. *Lodhas* do not dig whole tuber of *Melothria heterophylla*; a part is left in ground for regeneration. *Santhals* peel *Anola* bark by rotation from all sides, to allow healing. Among *Mikhir* of Assam, cutting or damaging trees of banyan and *pipal* is as sinful as killing a saint. It is believed that cutting of trees after sunset or burning *pipal* wood in *yagna* can bring wrath in the form of sickness of children or other ill luck to the family. Some cures through touch therapy like passing certain twigs over body in case of fever, or wearing a garland of pieces of *Bhuiaonla* (*Phyllanthus fraternus* Webst.) in jaundice are practiced. *Shisham* is considered auspicious and contact with its wood is considered to be good for health.

According to *Hindu Shastras* (treatises), the one who plants one each of the *pipal*, *neem* and banyan, 10 tamarinds, 3 each of *kaitha* (*Limonia acidissima* L.), *aonla* & *bel* and five mango plants, saves himself from being sent to hell. Cutting trees of *mahua* (*Madhuca longifolia*), *indrajau* (*Wrightia tinctoria*) and *palash* in cremation grounds is a taboo. Many beliefs relating to plants directly suggest the objective of conservation. A very significant aspect of this is preservation of certain forest patches called sacred forests, locally called as *devban* and *Law-lyndoh*¹⁵⁻¹⁸. The role of communities in proper restoration and preservation of these samples of remnants of pristine forest cover in these regions has been highlighted¹⁸. Conservation of individual species through faith has also played significant role in controlling exploitation. A banyan tree near Bangalore and another along Narmada in Gujarat, and those of baobab (*Adansonia digitata* L.) near Ajmer (mangaliawas), and at Barabanki have attained fame as *kalpvriksh* *Kalpavriksha* tree, which is believed to fulfill all needs and desires of the believers.

Divine botany of future

The first step in this is an appeal for more exploration both of scriptures and of existing practices and beliefs. Intensive observations and analysis should reveal scientific basis of many elements of faith and belief. Such research will need coordinated efforts of scholars in botany, theology and ancient languages like Sanskrit, Pali, Arabic, as the case may be. Simultaneously, faith could be put to a very useful practical work on conservation of individual species

and sacred forest. Such studies have immense potential in different parts of the world, particularly among indigenous societies who have always been sincere custodians of tradition and heritage. A very potential area is the study of temple gardens, temple trees and establishment of gardens of Divine botany of various kinds. Garden of different faiths could be called as *Tirthankara Vatika* for Jain faith, a *Bodhi Vatika* for plants in Buddhist faith, a *Guru Vatika* for plants for Sikh faith, and so on. Such gardens will serve several objectives. Apart from being educative like any other botanical garden in a general sense, they will propagate the principles of faith, and promote conservation. There are still many aspects, like sacred plants, etc. where further research work are needed¹⁹⁻²¹.

Dynamism in Divine botany

Dynamism is the other dimension in Divine botany of future. Divine botany is not static or stagnant. To some degree, evolution in the subject is evident. Abundant material is available in Jain, Buddhist and Brahmanical texts and that information may throw light on many aspects such as when, why and how an indigenous plant species was divinized; when, why and how the species got associated with Indian gods and goddesses. One sees several references to exotic species, some of which are of recent introduction in India. Fixing precise date or period of introduction into India is possible for it. Exotics to which mention is found include shoe flower (*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* L.), *kaner*, pomegranate (*Punica granatum* L.), and marigold. More studies will help in fixing with precision the identity of plants referred to in scriptures. Comparative studies regarding faith and divine aspects of various common plants in different faiths can be other new areas of further studies.

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