

# All about CLONING

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*wonders whether the science of  
cloning is as ancient as our epics*

**M**odern Genetic Engineers are contemplating to create "Human Clone" after the successful creation of Dolly in 1996 and now a cloned cow in Texas. It is well known today by changing the sequence of DNA and RNA with further permutation and combination of genes one can create the desired new life! But the question is whether this latest scientific 'triumph' has any ancient linkages? Perhaps yes! In Rig Veda one can find that Indra could take any 'desired' form! In Puranas one can find plenty of evidences of *mayabi* personalities who could change into anything they 'wished'. For example Mareech took the shape of a 'Golden Deer' to allure Sita in Ramayana. Mara the demon tried to disturb Buddha's meditation by creating various ferocious figures and alluring damsels.

Again we see from the Genealogy of Kashyapa the *Prajapati* or Creator that he on the one hand fathered gods, demigods, danavas and man on the other hand he also fathered nagas the serpent, trees, creepers, grass and cows. Interestingly, Kashyapa fathered all these 'forms' out of his twenty-one wives and of them 13 wives were sisters and daughters of Daksha. It may be noted that Aditi the mother of *Devas*, Diti the mother of *Daiytas*, Danu the mother of *Danavas* and Anala who created vegetation are all daughters of Daksha and wives of Kashyapa. One wonders how all these different 'forms' came from the parents who have almost similar genetic traits! All these mythologies sounds absurd! But from the latest perspective of Genetic Engineering one can imagine that through 'manipulations' of sequence of DNA etc. one can create different animates. Moreover, Devigita declares that *Panchabhuta* or five primary elements are universal for all animates and with the 'divisions and recombinations' of *Panchabhuta* one creates a 'life form'. Does all these indicate that there was some knowledge or system available in ancient times to 'clone' a living being! Again in Mahabharata one finds Kauravas first came as a 'mass of flesh' and they were kept in 101 pitchers to create their forms and life force. This was a cloning in Mahabharata and in Ramayana especially in regional versions we find that 'Maya Sita' was created so that sacredness of

Sita be upkeep and pass through the fire-ordeal test or *Agnipariksha*.

In Puranic Encyclopedia the author Vettam Mani quoting Devi Bhagavatam wrote that once God Agni came in the form of 'Brahman' to Ram and said "O, Sri Rama, thou art born to kill the demon Ravana and save the world from his atrocities. Sita is going to be a cause for that. Time is not far for you to finish this duty of yours. Ravana is soon to come and kidnap your wife, Sita. You must, therefore, allow me to play a trick on Ravana entrust Sita with me and I shall keep her safe. In place of her you can keep a Maya Sita (Phantom Sita) which will be a live replica of your real wife. In the end when you take back Sita after killing Ravana you will be compelled to throw your wife into the fire to test her chastity. At that time I will back the replica and give you back your real wife." Rama was pleased and agreed then Agni Dev created this Maya Sita through 'meditation' and at the time of *Agnipariksha* the original Sita was given back to Rama. Vettam Mani further stated that this clone Sita later became Svargalakshmi and Draupadi in Mahabharata.

**The concept of creating replicas was definitely there. Does it indicate that there was knowledge about cloning available even in those days.**

Thus we see that 'Maya Sita' was not an 'illusion' rather a personality who went through a normal life course and reincarnations etc. within the parameters of *paurnanic* beliefs. Interestingly enough the concept of Maya Sita was not referred in Valmiki's Ramayana but in regional versions there are varied references.

Srimad Dev Bhagavata describes that the 'shadow of Sita' was abducted by Ravana so the original Sita could pass the *agnipariksha* or fire-ordeal test. Brahmbhivarta Puran has similar references.

The Adhyatmik Ramayan and Ramcharit Manas describes that to kill the conspiracy of Ravana the 'Maya Sita' was created. In the Oriya version of Ramayan we find that Sita learnt the art of 'cloning' (*Mayarup*) from Narada and she herself created her own clone. Later she herself entered into fire during *agnipariksha*.

Thus we find varied descriptions of Maya Sita, though at times contradictions are found. Nevertheless, concept of creating replicas were definitely there. Does it all indicate that there was some knowledge system available in those days about cloning! Though the formulas are 'lost heritage' for us but 'concepts' and 'ideas' seem very much feasible. Today, when modern scientists say there is 'nothing to discover anymore', they should look into ancient texts to 'borrow' some more ideas which are innocently hidden in the *Pauranic* story lines.