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## CITA

Kamala K Kapur talks about mythological tales in modern context

By Seema Sharma/TNN

**Chandigarh:** "Myths are relevant for us and have tremendous healing qualities. Mythological tales have to be interpreted in every age but we remain oblivious of their significance in life," said noted author Kamala K Kapur at the release of her latest book, *Ganesha Goes to Lunch: Classics From Mystic India* at a function organised by the Chandigarh Sangeet Natak Academy and attended by theatre director Ramgopal Bajaj on Saturday evening. The book contains stories based on Hindu mythology.

"I have retold these mythological tales in the modern context by changing the plots, interpreting new characters while replacing some," she said. The message of the stories has been kept intact. Replying to a query on the strange title, she says, "The title comes from one of the stories that deals with greed of every kind - for money, sex, land, etc. In this story Ganesha, who goes to lunch at greedy Kubera's place, devours everything and then holds up a mirror to Kubera to tell him who really he is. We all need somebody to show us a mirror to show us our real selves."

Like myths around the world, the book offers both a window into a fascinating culture that has endured for thousands of years, and a code for living that

# WEAVING STORIES OUT OF MYTH

Kamala K Kapur in her latest book talks about mythological tales in modern context

can be applied to the modern world." They are reminders from spaceless eternity of the fabric of which we are made. Awaken us and help us live with, and within, the mystery that is the matrix of our being," said Kapur. The chapters provide a comprehensive history of the major gods and goddesses in Hindu mythology. The stories themselves, recreated and embellished, reveal timeless insights into human condition.

Kapur attributes her inclination toward religion to her maid whom she would call 'Deviamma' as it was she who would adorn her altar with images of Hindu gods and goddesses as well as figures of other religions. "I believe mankind is one. I am planning to write my next book on the 13th century Persian poet, jurist and theologian Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi, and the following

book would be based on Sikh stories. And I might continue my literary journey with subjects based on Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism and so on after that."

## BOOK TALK

Educated in the United States, Kapur is a poet, playwright, novelist and educator. Her plays 'Clytemnestra', 'The Curlew's Cry' and 'Zanana', which have been produced in New Delhi, have earned her two Indian national awards.



Jaswinder Singh

Her two books in poetry - 'As a Fountain in a Garden' and her first book, 'Radha Sings', published in 1987 - have drawn critical acclaim. Her fiction and poetry have appeared in anthologies in India as well as abroad. She was on the faculty of Grossmont College in San Diego, California, and at Delhi University. Her recent release is her first attempt

**A poet, playwright, novelist and educator Kapur, who believes that mankind is one, attributes her inclination towards religion to her maid whom she would call 'Deviamma' as it was she who could adorn her altar with images of Hindu gods and goddesses as well as figures of other religions.**

toward prose.

Dabbling with different forms of writing comes naturally to Kapur, with subjects springing from her surrounding. "Poetry is the deepest source of expression for me while playwrighting have a social function. The prose lies somewhere in between," she avers. She loves to read Shakespeare, Yeats and Emily Dickinson. Currently she divides her time between California and Kulu in Himachal Pradesh, where she lives with her husband Payson R Stevens, who is an earth scientist and an artist.