



Revival of Myths in Modern Outfit: Study of Amish Tripathi's 'Shiva Trilogy'

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ABSTRACT: Amish Tripathi (born 18 October 1974) is an Indian author and diplomat. He is known best for The Shiva Trilogy and Ram Chandra Series.

Amish's books have sold over 6 million copies in the Indian subcontinent since 2010.^{[2][3]} He is also Minister (Culture & Education)^[4] at the High Commission of India in the UK and Director of the Nehru Centre, London.^{[5][6]} In addition, he is a host for TV documentaries, most recently for Discovery TV, in Legends of the Ramayan^{[7][8]} and also The Journey of India with co-host Amitabh Bachchan.

KEYWORDS-Amish, Tripathi, Shiva, Trilogy, myths, outfits

I. INTRODUCTION

The Shiva Trilogy is a fictional story chronicled through three books - The Immortals of Meluha, The Secret of the Nagas, and The Oath of the Vayuputras. It tells the tale of a man named Shiva, who is remembered as the Mahadev, the God of Gods, for his extraordinary adventures 4000 years ago.

Set in 1900 BC, during what is commonly known as the Indus Valley civilization, the story is based in Meluha, which was once a proud empire created by Lord Ram. The Suryavanshi rulers of Meluha face multiple perils, including the slow extinction of their primary river, Saraswati, devastating terrorist attacks from the land of the Chandravanshis in the east, and an alliance between the Chandravanshis and the Nagas - a deformed race of humans with remarkable martial skills.^[1,2,3]

The only hope for the Suryavanshis is an ancient legend that speaks of a hero who will emerge when evil reaches epic proportions and all seems lost. This hero is believed to be Shiva, a rough-hewn Tibetan immigrant, who is drawn to his destiny by duty and love. The trilogy explores whether Shiva is truly the hero that the legend speaks of and whether he even wants to be that hero. As he embarks on his journey, Shiva must grapple with the forces of good and evil and ultimately decide whether he will destroy evil or succumb to it. The Ramchandra Pentralogy is a prequel book series consisting of five books, four of which have been released.

Immortals of Meluha :

1900 BC. In what modern Indians mistakenly call the Indus Valley Civilisation. The inhabitants of that period called it the land of Meluha – a near perfect empire created many centuries earlier by Lord Ram, one of the greatest monarchs that ever lived.

This once proud empire and its Suryavanshi rulers face severe perils as its primary river, the revered Saraswati, is slowly drying to extinction. They also face devastating terrorist attacks from the east, the land of the Chandravanshis. To make matters worse, the Chandravanshis appear to have allied with the Nagas, an ostracised and sinister race of deformed humans with astonishing martial skills.

The only hope for the Suryavanshis is an ancient legend: 'When evil reaches epic proportions, when all seems lost, when it appears that your enemies have triumphed, a hero will emerge.'

Is the rough-hewn Tibetan immigrant Shiva, really that hero? And does he want to be that hero at all? Drawn suddenly to his destiny, by duty as well as by love, will Shiva lead the Suryavanshi vengeance and destroy evil?^[5,7,8]

This is the first book in a trilogy on Shiva, the simple man whose karma re-cast him as our Mahadev, the God of Gods.



The Secret of the Nagas :

Today, He is a God.

4000 years ago, He was just a man.

The hunt is on. The sinister Naga warrior has killed his friend Brahaspati and now stalks his wife Sati. Shiva, the Tibetan immigrant who is the prophesied destroyer of evil, will not rest till he finds his demonic adversary. His vengeance and the path to evil will lead him to the door of the Nagas, the serpent people. Of that he is certain. The evidence of the malevolent rise of evil is everywhere. A kingdom is dying as it is held to ransom for a miracle drug. A crown prince is murdered. The Vasudevs – Shiva’s philosopher guides – betray his unquestioning faith as they take the aid of the dark side. Even the perfect empire, Meluha is riddled with a terrible secret in Maika, the city of births. Unknown to Shiva, a master puppeteer is playing a grand game. In a journey that will take him across the length and breadth of ancient India, Shiva searches for the truth in a land of deadly mysteries – only to find that nothing is what it seems.

Fierce battles will be fought. Surprising alliances will be forged. Unbelievable secrets will be revealed in this second book of the Shiva Trilogy, the sequel to the #1 national bestseller, The Immortals of Meluha.

The Oath of the Vayuputras - Shiva Trilogy 3 :

The Oath of Vayuputras is the eagerly awaited third and final part of the Shiva Trilogy by Amish. Shiva, as portrayed in the previous books of the series, is a mortal Tibetan Tribal Chief who becomes the savior of the people of Meluha and joins hands with the Nagas. In this part, Shiva realizes that Nagas are not his enemies and determines to unveil the root of all evil and his true enemy.

In this final part of the Shiva Trilogy, Shiva reaches to Panchvati, the capital of the Nagas and comes face to face with Evil, a name which instills fear in the hearts of the fiercest of warriors. Shiva who is also known as Neelkanth by now, prepares for a holy war against his true enemy. Come what may, Shiva must not fail now. A series of brutal battles begins and it convulses India. In desperation to win over Evil, Shiva reaches out to the Vayuputras, who have never offered any help to him previously. He meets the chiefs of the Vasudevas and the Vayuputras in the hidden cities of Ujjain and Pariha. [9,10,11]

Shiva also comes to know the reality about many characters that he thinks are close to him and many new characters have been introduced too in this part by the writer. Many people die in the battles but will Shiva succeed in overthrowing Evil? If so, at what cost to himself and to India? Will he finally emerge as a God from a normal mortal existence? This final part of the trilogy reveals the last and the vigorous journey that Shiva undertakes in order to destroy the evil.

II. DISCUSSION

Shiva trilogy is a bundle of three charismatic and magnanimous novels written by Amish Tripathi and titled as “The immortals of Meluha, The Secrets of Nagas, and The Oath of Vayuputras. The trilogy primarily centers on the narrative of Shiva, the most well-known Hindu god, and follows his transformation from a Tibetan immigrant to Mahadev, the Lord of Humanity. Even though Amish took inspiration for all of his characters from the Siva Purana and other old holy scriptures, his stories also offer a rationale and scientific explanation for the incidents and symbols. The current research will examine the scientific justification of well-known symbols in the Shiva trilogy. [12,13,15] Shiva's blue neck developing or becoming Neelkanth is an idea that Amish Tripathi wrote about in an extremely wonderful manner. According to a prevalent myth, the poison Halahal was also released with amrut during Samudra Manthan. Everyone prayed to Lord Shiva, who then squeezed the poison that was spreading over the area into the cavity of his palm and devoured it out of compassion. Even on Lord Shiva, the poison (which was a concentrated contaminant of oceanic water) demonstrated its potency and turned his throat blue, yet the place ended up becoming his unique jewel. “He has a blue neck because he drank deadly poison in order to protect the world from it, keeping it in his throat rather than swallowing it, and it made his neck turn blue. (Vanamali,25) However, in the novel, the reason of Shiva’s blue neck is quite different. In an attempt to combine it with science, Amish explains that When Shiva was a young boy, his uncle Manobhu, a wise man and Vayu Putra, handed him a remedy that he had created with Lord Mithra. Shiva was selected



by Uncle Manobhu to be Neelkantha, and he was then educated to become the somras, the savior and slayer of evil. When Daksha called the Shiva clan to Meluha via Nandi, they arrived with the Somras that Dr. Ayurvati had given to them. His neck became blue as a result of both medications reacting at the same moment. In popular myth, Shiva is a God with three eyes. “The third eye on his forehead denotes him as the Lord of yoga. This inner eye distinguishes truth from illusion and conquers lust. (25 Vanamali). “The third eye is perhaps the greatest symbol of Shiva’s transcendent nature, one that is unfettered by ideas that differentiate beauty from ugliness, left from right, top from bottom, past from future, men from women, minerals from plants, and plants from animals. This Uniting the self with the true Siva Tattva by the control of the senses is real wearing of Bhasma, because Lord Siva through His third eye of wisdom burnt passion to ashes” (28 Siva Puran)[17,18,19] It is explained in Siva purana, that Siva has the fiery third eye. Constant Abhisheka cools this eye. It leads us on to the realisation of self and bestows on us eternal bliss and frees us from births and deaths. It shows us the light of life. It is the eye of intuition. It is the third eye of Siva. This third eye destroys all illusions and passions. (51, Siva Puran) Siva is called ‘Tryambaka’, because He has a third eye in his forehead, the eye of wisdom (Jnana Chakshus). 60 Siva Puran) Another myth says, one day, Parvati covers Shiva’s eyes with her palms. The world is plunged in darkness. To get the sun to shine again, Shiva opens his third eye. So fiery is the glance of this eye that it causes Parvati’s palms, placed over the left and right eye, to sweat. From this sweat is born a child called Andhaka, the one born in darkness. (129,7 Secrets of Shiva) In another philosophical version, the third eye of Shiva indicates transcendent wisdom. The third eye, therefore, embodies absence of discrimination and choice, hence absence of desire. (92, 7 Secrets of Shiva) A metaphorical explanation of the third eye is given by Sadhguru, “When we refer to the “third eye”, we are symbolically talking about seeing something that the two sensory eyes cannot see. The sensory eyes are outward-oriented. The third eye is to see your interiority – the nature of yourself and your existence. It is not some extra appendage or crack in your forehead. [20,21,22] That dimension of perception through which one can perceive that which is beyond the physical is referred to as the third eye.” This logic of Shiva's third eye is also explained in the Shiva Trilogy with reference to the theory of the brain and its hemispheres, and it was Neelkanth who helped people to understand it. As a young child, Shiva experienced a sharp discomfort between his eyes. His uncle Manobhu administered some sort of painkiller to him. The flaming portion resembled a vertical eye. The tale discusses Shiva's remarkable response to somras as well as the reasoning behind the third eye. Gopal explains, “[Third eye] is the region between one’s brows. It is believed that there are seven chakras or vortices within the human body which allow the reception and transmission of energy. The sixth chakra is called the ajna chakra, the vortex of the third eye. These chakras are activated by yogis after years of practice. Of course, they can also be activated by medicines. The Vayuputras use medicines to activate the third eye of those amongst their young who are potential candidates. (The Oath of the Vayuputras, 111) But Lord Manobhu believed that Shiva was born with pre-active third eye. He, hence chose Shiva to be the recipient of the Vayuputra medicine which is more suitable for those candidates who have this eye active. The uncle smiled. ‘It’ll set you on the path of your destiny.’ (The Secret of the Nagas, 143) Since the beginning of the book, Shiva has been biologically and psychologically groomed to play the role of Neelkanth. Another symbol is Har Har Mahadev, the chant. Firstly, the chant is found in the ancient Veda - Rigveda. The chant has different meanings. In time of sorrow or suffering the devotees can chant ‘Har Har Mahadev’ to help them overcome their sufferings. The chant Har Har Mahadev is a chant related to Lord Shiva. ‘Har’ in Sanskrit means take away or destruction. ‘Mahadev’ means - Lord Shiva. So, the chant Har Har Mahadev’s meaning is - Elimination of all distress, sorrows, and obstacles of the devotees by Lord Shiva. The explanation of the slogan Har Har Mahadev is given differently in the selected novel. ‘A man becomes Mahadev when he fights for good. A Mahadev is not born as one from his mother’s womb. He is forged in the heat of battle when he wages a war to destroy evil... “I am Mahadev, but I am not the only one! ... I am not the only one! For I see a hundred thousand Mahadevs in front of me! I see a hundred thousand men willing to fight on the side of the, good! I see a hundred thousand men willing to battle evil! I see a hundred thousand men capable of destroying evil! ... Har ek hai Mahadev! Har Har Mahadev’ bellowed Shiva. The Meluhans roared. [23,22,25] All of us are Mahadevs! (The Immortals of Meluha, 344-345)” Popularly in India, the OM is the symbol of the almighty GOD. It is called Akshar Brhma. When Shree Krishana describes his own form in The Gita. He states, He is OM among the words. “Giram asmy ekam Aksharam” Om is described in Shiva Puran in detail. It is called Pranava here. ‘Pra’ denotes the ocean of the natural world originated from nature. ‘Nav’ is the ship for passing over the world. It means pranava (Om) is the means to reach ultimate God. It also has prohibitory meaning - castaway affairs. On another meaning of pranava-‘Pra’ is the eliminator of actions and ‘Nav’ is the giver of divine wisdom. It eliminates all actions and gives divine wisdom and knowledge. That is why yogis called it Pranava. In the Siva Purana, Siva is called pranav because he is free from ‘Maya’ and pure in nature. This Pranav makes pure in nature of his seeker. Here ‘A’ denotes Lord Shiva, ‘U’ denote Power and ‘M’ is the unity of both. ‘Om’ is also described in detail in Chandogya Upanishad. Upanishad says ‘Om’ is the nearest name of God. When we use ‘Om’, God becomes happy. Just a general person becomes happy when someone calls him by his nickname. Therefore, by name and symbol, ‘Om’ refers to God. In Chandogya Upanishad, it has been said that – Earth is the extract all the creatures, Water is the extract of the earth, Medicines are the extract of the water, Man is the extract of the medicines, Man’s extract is speech,



Speech's extract is Sam, and Sam's extract is the 'Om.' So 'Om' is excellence and eligible to be a symbol of divine. Thus, 'Om' is an eloquent letter. Worship of the letter 'Om' seeks all desires. 'Om' is also a symbol of permission. When a person gives permission to another person says 'Om'. In starting studying Vedas it was used to say 'Om'. Further, Siva says, the letter A represents my northward face 'U' represents westward, 'M' stands for southern Face, the Bindu' connecting the three words A-U-M is the middle-faced Deva and the fifth face is over-awing.) A singular deity thus manifests as 'Omikakshara' or as Shiva Shakti which is all pervasive and omnipotent. [25]

III. RESULTS

Bhagavan Shiva declared that continuous recitation of the mantra raja 'OM' sums up all the Vedas and scriptures. The symbol of 'Aum' which is translated in detail in the novel is significant. 'My Lord, Aum is the holiest word in our religion. It is considered to be the primeval sound of nature. The hymn of the universe. It was so holy that for many millennia, most people would not insult it by putting it down in written form.' In another case of mistaken identity, the word 'Om' in the novels is said to be a letter so holy that people were afraid to take it and even write it. It was only after many many millennia that it was finally put down on paper. This is also not true about 'Om' or any other word in Sanskrit. (The Immortals... 58) In fact, as anyone sufficiently familiar with Indian ethos would certify that 'Om' is a very sacred word for everyone in India and everyone takes it without fear. In fact, it is taken to be the words to be uttered with the least amount of fear and it is also written everywhere, on shops, at homes, on vehicles. And this has always been the case. (Muktananda 85) King Bharat came up with this symbol of unity between the Suryavanshis and the Chandravanshis. The top half in white represented the Chandravanshis. The bottom half in red represented the Suryavanshis. The part in orange coming out of the meeting of these two parts represented the common path. The crescent moon to the right of the symbol was the existing Chandravanshi symbol. And the sun above it was the existing Suryavanshi symbol. [23,25] To signify that this was a pact blessed by the gods, Lord Bharat got a mandate for the pronunciation of this symbol as the holy word Aum. (The Immortals... 59-60) There is another symbol Swastika that can be translated into "that which is associated with the well-being or very simply a lucky charm" (The Immortals of Meluha, 282). The theory of Om presented in the Hindu texts is similar to the description of Om provided by Amish Tripathi in his book. This sign OM was addressed by Patanjali in his Yogasutra. Ideas and words go hand in hand. Since God is the fundamental truth of the cosmos, he must be portrayed by some fundamentally natural and allinclusive sounds in order for us to have an understanding of him. Hindus consider this sound to be the OM. The initial letter of the alphabet, according to Swami Vivekananda, is the source of the sound since it can be uttered without using any of the tongue or palate. The closed lip makes the letter M, the final sound in the series, and the bottom of the mouth makes the letter U. Thus, we might conclude that OM is a symbol for the entire phenomenon of sound production. It is the oldest term for God that has ever transmitted to humankind. Numerous followers have used it, always referring to just one specific deity in the most Widespread manner. Therefore, the term "OM" is the most holy word of all if sanctity is applied to it. Amish's utopian world Meluha represents the major trends of the culture of ancient India. It discussed not only Aum and Swastika but other symbols like trishul, animals, rivers, etc. having their own symbolic and scientific significance. Amish himself explains in one of the interviews, "Symbols are essentially words, designs or any structure which convey a complex meaning very easily and quickly. It is one of the core basis on which, cultures are based. The design itself does not matter as much as the meaning associated with the design." He associated scientific and rational explanations with ancient myths. To conclude, Symbols can be viewed as multivalent, irreplaceable, shared to the extent that they have significance across cultures and times, and pointing to inner transformation, whether they appear in ancient myths, religions, or contemporary popular culture.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

This article analyses the use of Myth in Shiva Trilogy Amish Tripathi with the objective of bringing out the symbols employed by the writer in the works and also the meaning they refer to. In general, writers use symbols to express their ideas and notions very effectively. Further, use of symbols will add colour, variety ornamentations to the works. From society to society, symbols and the meanings they allude are different. It is applicable to religions also. In a certain religion, certain symbols allude to certain things. But in other religions they are not used for the same purpose. Hinduism is one of the oldest religion of the world. Amish Tripathi bases his Shiva Trilogy on Lord shiva, and in order to delineate His spiritual greatness, Amit has employed meaning many a symbol associated with Lord Shiva. [27]



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