



Mythology allied to science: A study of Amish Tripathi's Immortals of Meluha

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Abstract: One of the great blunders of our day is the widespread belief that science and religion must be in opposition. Natural vs. spiritual realms are often dealt with differently. When dealing with problems at their intersection, disagreements concerning where the borders between these worlds lay occur.

We may characterize faith in a religion as faith, and empirical proof in science as evidence. This study follows this concept and considers 'The Immortals of Meluha' in this context. Amish Tripathi's novel The Immortals of Meluha is the first part of the Shiva trilogy. The book is about ancient India's rich mythical legacy. In today's world, we recognize Shiva as the protagonist.

The book is an homage to Lord Shiva and a lesson in the significance of his life for humans, a knowledge forgotten in the shadows of time and human stupidity. This study attempts to investigate the beliefs of Meluha's immortals as well as the role of science in their views.

Keywords: science, religion, legacy, intersection

I. INTRODUCTION

“The most beautiful and deepest experience a man can have is the sense of the mysterious. It is the underlying principle of religion as well as all serious endeavors in art and science.” – **Albert Einstein**

The Vedanta, Hinduism's scientific and theological foundation, and the eternal knowledge of the Vedas contain the core of Hinduism. Its "Bible" is the Bhagavad-Gita, God's holy hymn. Its scientific and intellectual elements have piqued the interest of some of the world's most brilliant scientists and philosophers, including Erwin Schrödinger, Robert Oppenheimer, Albert Einstein, and Aldous Huxley. It discusses billions of years of history, the origin of the cosmos, medical science, technology, space exploration, anatomy and physiology, art, music, and so on. It is hardly an exaggeration to state that the Vedas include practically every subject under the globe.

In Hinduism, there are five fundamental concepts: (1) God - Ishwara, (2) Soul - Jiva, (3) Time - Kala, (4) Matter - Prakriti, and (5) Action - Karma. The first four principles are everlasting, but the final aspect is transient. Hinduism, based on these principles, gives a comprehensive knowledge and comprehension of life and the cosmos. Hinduism, in its purest form, is also known as Sanatana Dharma, or the perpetual function of the living organism. One of Hinduism's distinguishing traits is its vivid and comprehensive portrayal of God and His manifestations.

The Immortals of Meluha follows the journey of an amazing man as he explores his energies and redefines religion. On the basis of the foregoing, the paper attempts to read The Immortals of Meluha.

The Principle of Karma, Free Will, and a Wider View of Dharma:The notion of a natural 'Law of Karma' exists in the Vedantic tradition. The law of karma is comparable to Newton's Law's laws of action and reaction. The outcomes of the law of karma are unique and cannot be mistaken. 'Karma' is the solution to the question, "Why do terrible things happen to good people?" Even if a person does not recall the deed that resulted in the current reaction, the law of karma remains in effect. The embodied souls' free choice and desire drive the wheels of karma. The topic is further explained in the text lines that follow.

'Now who the bloody hell are the Nagas? Asked Shiva

"They are cursed people, my Lord," gasped Nandi. "They are born with hideous deformities because of the sins of their previous births. Deformities like extra hands or horribly misshapen faces."(59)

"Vikarma people, my lord,' said Nandi sighing deeply 'are people who have been punished in this birth for the sins of their previous birth. Hence they have to live this life out with dignity and tolerate their present suffering with grace. This is the only way they can wipe their karma clean of the sins of their previous births. Vikarma men have their own order of penance and women have their own order.'"(93)

"There are many rules that the Vikarma women have to follow. They have to pray for forgiveness every month to Lord Agni, the purifying Fire God, through a specifically mandated puja. They are not allowed to marry since they may contaminate others with their bad fate. They are not allowed to touch any person who is not related to them or is not part of their daily life"(93)

"Who decides that the Vikarma people had committed sins in their previous birth?"

"Their own karma, my Lord', said Nandi, his eyes suggesting the obvious. 'For example if a woman gives birth to a still born child, why would she be punished thus unless she had committed some terrible sin in her previous birth? Or if a man suddenly contracts an incurable disease and gets paralyzed, why would it happen to him unless the universe was penalizing him for the sins of his previous life?'"(93)

According to Vedanta, human life is the most superior form of life, and all other forms of life below the level of human awareness cannot escape the cycle of karma under normal conditions. As a result, Vedanta emphasizes the significance of the human form of life. If a person utilizes his or her free will to kill innocent people, he or she is said to be committed "crimes against creation" and is liable to the law of karma.

The God's drink: Somras:

Somras was thought to have been created by none other than Lord Brahma. The procedure of creating it was kept secret and only revealed to the seven individuals chosen by Brahma himself. The Saptrishis were named after these seven individuals.

The Saptrishis then passed this knowledge on to their disciples. The Somras was thought to have medical properties that may preserve the human body from deteriorating. It is stated that just as oxygen helps in digestion by breaking down food particles, it also oxidizes our body cells, leading to aging of the body cells. However, Somras aids the body in ridding itself of excess oxygen, so preventing cell degeneration and allowing the body to remain youthful and appear young even if the person's real age is well above 100 years.

There were two beverages mentioned throughout the Vedic period. Soma is one, while Sura is another. Soma and Sura are the two beverages mentioned in Vedic scriptures. The Rigveda depicts soma as a divine concoction, whereas sura is primarily a human beverage. The Yajurveda, on the other hand, challenges sura and elevates it to the position of soma.

The narrative also depicts the use of Somras as a divine drink and its scientific production process.

“So what did Lord Brahma do?” asked Shiva.

“After a lot of research, Lord Brahma invented the Somras, which when consumed, reacts with oxidants, absorbs them and then expels them from the body as sweat or urine. Because of the Somras, there are no oxidants left in the body.”(135)

“Yes. That’s why all Meluhans are taught about two things from a young age—water and hygiene. Water is the cleanest absorber of the effluents that the Somras generates and excretes as toxins. Meluhans are taught to drink gallons of water. And everything that can be washed should be washed! The Meluhans bathe at least twice a day. All ablutions are done in specific rooms and underground drains then safely carry the waste out of the city.”(135)

“Manufacturing the Somras is not without its fair share of difficulties. It requires various ingredients that are not easily available. For example, the Sanjivani trees. The manufacturing procedure also generates a lot of heat. So we have to use lot of water during the processing to keep the mixture stable. Also, the crushed branches of the Sanjivani tree have to be churned with the waters of the Saraswati River before processing begins. Water from other sources doesn’t work” (136)

Hindu explanation for God:

Hinduism likewise embraces the idea of a single God. In Hinduism, there have been many different streams, and many of them advocate various attributes of God. But from a Vedantic viewpoint, the most significant attribute of God is His personality. It's not that we whimsically assign a deity a human form or human traits, or anything like that. Instead, it is God's own revelation. The Srimadbhagavatam (S.B. 3:26:49) has a holy precept that states: "The cause existing undoubtedly in its outcome as well." According to this line of reasoning, since we can all attest to the distinct personalities that all evolved living things possess, it stands to reason that the Supreme source of all personality must also exist. The book demonstrates that there is a God inside every single person.

“A man becomes a 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.” (344)

The concept of Om:

“Picking up a palm- leaf booklet and the thin charcoal writing stick from the side table, Shiva drew the symbol

Nandi frowned. “That is an ancient symbol that some people used for the word AUM.” But AUM? Asked Shiva. ‘My Lord, Aum is the holiest word in our religion. It is considered the pre-mortal sound of nature. The hymn

of the universe. It was so holy that for many millennia, most people would not insult it by putting down in written form.'

'Then how did this symbol come about?'

'It was devised by Lord Bharat, a great ruler who had conquered practically all of India many thousands of years ago.' (56)

Om is a sign that may have a wide range of intricate metaphorical interpretations due to its tripartite nature, distinctive form, and distinctive sound. Three curves—curves 1, 2, and 3—one semicircle—curve 4—and a dot make up the AUM sign. The wide lower curve 1 represents the waking state (jagrat), in which consciousness is directed outside of oneself through the senses. The bigger size denotes that this is the predominant (or most prevalent) state of human awareness.

The top curve 2 represents a condition of profound slumber (sushupti) or unconsciousness. This is a condition in which the sleeper has no cravings or dreams.

The dream state is represented by the middle curve 3 (which is between profound sleep and the waking state) (swapna). In this condition, the individual's consciousness is focused inwardly, and the dreaming self sees an intriguing picture of the world beyond the eyelids.

These are the three stages of an individual's consciousness, and because Indian mystic thinking believes that everything manifested reality comes from awareness, these three curves reflect the whole natural laws.

The dot represents the fourth stage of consciousness, known as turiya in Sanskrit. The mind in this condition sees neither externally nor within, nor both at the same time. It represents the cessation of all distinct, relative existence. The ultimate goal of all spiritual effort is to achieve this completely silent, tranquil, and joyous condition. The other three states are illuminated by this Absolute (non-relative) state. Finally, the semicircle represents Maya and distinguishes the dot from the other three curves. Thus, it is the delusion of maya that keeps us from attaining the ultimate degree of joy.

The semicircle is open at the top and, when drawn correctly, does not touch the dot. This signifies that maya has no effect on this greatest stage. Maya has no effect on the manifested phenomena. This influence prevents the seeker from achieving his ultimate aim of realizing the One, all-pervading, pure consciousness, absolute principle. In this way, AUM's shape embodies both the unmanifest and the manifested, the noumenon and the actuality.

The three-syllabled AUM's pronunciation is also subject to a deep logical examination as a sacred sound. Independent of cultural settings, the initial letter of the alphabet A is recognized as the fundamental sound. Because it is created towards the rear of the open mouth, it is believed to incorporate and be included in all other sounds produced by the human vocal organs. The initial letter of the Sanskrit alphabet is, indeed, A.

A's open mouth draws closer to M's closing. Between the two is U, which is produced from the openness of A but sculpted by the closing lips. It should be noted here that, when understood in connection to the three curves, the three syllables that comprise AUM are vulnerable to the same metaphorical decipherment. The dream state

(signified by U) exists between the waking and profound sleep states (M). A dream is, in fact, the result of the consciousness of waking life being influenced by the unconsciousness of sleep.

AUM therefore contains the entire alphabet, since its utterance begins at the rear of the mouth (A), travels in between (U), and eventually reaches the lips (M). All alphabets may now be categorized according to the region of the mouth from which they are uttered. The rear of the mouth and the lips are the two endpoints between which the entire alphabet oscillates; both are included in the single act of saying AUM.

When the final element of the sound AUM (the M), known as ma or maker, is spoken, the lips shut. This is equivalent to closing the door to the outside world and instead searching deep inside ourselves for the Ultimate truth.

The Science Behind Lord Shiva's Transformation into Neelkanth:

“Ayurvati just pointed at Shiva’s neck.” Nandi looked up. The neck shone an eerie iridescent blue. With a cry that sounded like that of a long caged animal just released from captivity, Nandi collapsed on his knees. “My Lord! You have come! The Neelkanth has come!” (23)

Lord Shiva's blue neck (Neelkanth) signifies that one should neither remove the vices out nor suppress them inside, but rather adapt or modify them. The color blue represents slow poison or unpleasant ideas. The same in the neck signals that the poison should not be drunk or spat out, but rather be held in the throat momentarily until it can be neutralized at the suitable time.

Attachments, wrath, greed, wants, and ego are some of the well-described slow poisons (Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha and Ahankaar).

As an example, consider anger. Non-fulfillment of wishes is the basic cause of all rage. Anger, on the other hand, may be expressive or repressive. Expressed rage will result in aggressive conduct and social unhealthiness. It can potentially burst a heart blockage, resulting in a heart attack, or a blood artery in the brain, resulting in a brain hemorrhage.

Suppressed anger, on the other hand, causes the body to generate chemicals that cause ailments such as acidity, asthma, and diarrhea, as well as cholesterol buildup in the blood vessels, which leads to future blockages. Anger may be managed by doing the right thing rather than what is expedient, by neutralizing anger by the purposeful growth of opposing good ideas, and so on. For example, silently passing on love to any individual can remove furious ideas from the mind (love is opposite of anger).

Anger causes physiological reactions that can be fatal in the presence of heart blockages. Anger goes through several stages. The Anger Expression Inventory measures anger frequency (trait anger), intensity, expression (anger-out), suppression (anger-in), and recollection. In legend, Lord Shiva ingested the 'halahal' poison and retained it in his neck during the Shravan month during the churning of the ocean (Samundra Manthan).

"Samundra Manthan" refers to the meditation practice performed in the Chaturmas month of Shravan, while "halahal" poison refers to the bad thoughts created throughout the meditation process. It also refers to the source of negativity in one's life when living a contemplative life.

Shiva's teaching was conveyed through our Vedic knowledge and several Upanishads. Scientists today are merely verifying those principles through global research. And we do not believe them until they come from the west.

CONCLUSION:

As scientists attempt to further investigate the concepts stated in the Vedas, they discover them to be quite scientific in nature. Many plants that have been mentioned as having medical characteristics are now being verified to have the same. Amish, in his novel *The Immortals of Meluha*, similarly attempted to prove that Lord Shiva was a historical figure rather than an imagined character from legend. He has also taken Vedic themes from scripture and portrayed them in the shape of science in this novel.

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