



# Shiva in Myths, Culture and Religion in Amish Tripathi's *The Immortals of Meluha*

**Abha Shree**

**Research Scholar,**

**Univ. Department of English**

**B R A Bihar University, Muzaffarpur**

**and**

**Dr. Anita Ghosh**

**Associate Professor and Former Head**

**Department of English**

**R D S College, Muzaffarpur**

**B R A Bihar University, Muzaffarpur**

## **Abstract:-**

In Amish Tripathi's *Shiva Trilogy*, Shiva is presented as a human figure, a Tibetan immigrant to Meluha, who becomes the legendary Neelkanth, the prophesied destroyer of evil. The trilogy re-imagines the Hindu deity Lord Shiva, exploring how a man could become a god through his actions and karma. While the trilogy draws inspiration from the Shiva Purana and Hindu mythology, it also humanizes the figure of Shiva, depicting him as a man with flaws and strengths, and explores his journey from a mortal to a legendary figure.

The trilogy portrays Shiva as a tribal chief from the Guna tribe, not as the divine Mahadev, highlighting his human nature and journey. Shiva's arrival in Meluha and the consumption of Somras, which turns his throat blue, fulfill the prophecy of Neelkanth, a legendary figure who will save the empire from evil. Shiva's journey is driven by his desire to find and destroy the evil that threatens Meluha, leading him on a quest that explores various empires and their values.

The trilogy explores the concept of how gods could be human beings in the past and achieved immortality through their actions, showcasing Shiva's journey as a reflection of this idea.

Shiva's actions and karma, particularly his bravery and his ability to overcome obstacles, contribute to his eventual godlike status, even though he starts as a mortal.

The trilogy draws inspiration from the Shiva Purana, which is a major source of Hindu mythology about Shiva,

but it also takes creative liberties to humanize and reimagine the story.

*The Immortals of Meluha* is a fantasy novel by Indian writer Amish Tripathi, his first book and the first in both the Amish verse and of Shiva Trilogy. The story is set in the land of Meluha and starts with the arrival of the Shiva. The Meluhans believe that Shiva is their fabled saviour Neelkanth. Shiva decides to help the Meluhans in their war against the Chandravanshis, who had joined forces with the cursed Nagas; however, during his journey and the fight that ensues, Shiva learns how his choices actually reflect who he aspires to be and how they lead to dire consequences.

**Keywords:-** Myth, mythology, puranas, epic, Meluha, incarnation, immortal forces, incarnation, rituals, dreams, culture, tribe, Shiva trilogy

### Introduction

Myth has significant role in man's everyday life in the form of rituals, dreams, customs, religious beliefs, etc. It has various facets for various purposes and each facet is unique and realistic to the perceiver who consciously or sub-consciously adopts it or transforms it. Myth dominates and shapes not only the individual psyche but also the whole cultural aspect of the people. Amish Tripathi has adopted the original myth of India and has re-narrated them in his writings. The author's presentation of myth does not alter the belief or faith of the original, but gives an opportunity to re-read the myths of Shiva from different perspectives.

Meluha is a near-perfect kingdom that Lord Ram, one of the greatest Hindu rulers who ever lived, built hundreds of years earlier. Despite this, the domain's once-satisfied Suryavanshi rulers face extreme danger as the domain's primary stream, Saraswati, slowly disappears. They also have to deal with brutal assaults from the Chandravanshis, who have joined forces with the Nagas, a hated race that has physical scars. Daksha, the current lord of Meluha, sends messengers to Tibet in North India to welcome the nearby clans to Meluha. Shiva, the Guna king, accepts the proposal and moves his family to Meluha. Once showed up at they are gotten by Ayurvati, the Head of Medication of the Meluhans. The Meluhan way of life piques the interest of the Gunas. The family awakens with a high fever and excessive sweating on their first night of staying. Medication is managed by specialists at Meluhan.

Shiva is the only one who does not experience these side effects, and Ayurvati notices that his throat has turned blue. According to the Meluhans, Shiva is their legendary friend Neelkanth in need. After that, Shiva is taken to Devagiri, Meluha's capital, where he meets Daksha. Shiva and his friends Veerbhadra and Nandi meet Daksha's princess Sati while they are there. Due to the wrongs she has done in previous births, she is a Vikarma, a distant person. Shiva tries to woo her, but she turns down his advances. Even though the Vikarma rule prevents them from doing so, Shiva eventually wins her heart and vows to break down the rule and wed Sati.

Shiva learns about the conflict with the Chandravanshis while he is in Devagiri and also meets Brahaspati, the Meluhans' chief inventor. Brahaspati invites Shiva and the majestic family on a mission to Mount Mandar, where the fantastic drink Somras is manufactured using the waters of the Saraswati. Shiva discovers that the

mixture that turned blue in his throat was actually undiluted Somras, which can be fatal when consumed undiluted. However, he was shielded, demonstrating that he was the Neelkanth. Because Somras is resistant to aging, the Meluhans lived for a longtime. The regal family returns to Devagiri after Brahaspati and Shiva form a close bond. The Meluhans awaken one morning to the sound of gunfire at Mandar, breaking up the mountain and killing the researchers who lived there. Shiva discovers the Naga symbol, confirming the Nagas' connection to the Chandravanshis despite the absence of any evidence of Brahaspati.

Shiva, angered by this, declares war on the Chandravanshis at Swadweep, where he is chatting with Kanakhala, the chief minister of Devagiri, and Parvateshwar, the commander of the Meluhan Army. The Meluhans and the Swadweepans engage in a bloody struggle, which the Meluhans win. The Chandravanshi ruler is apprehended, but after observing the Neelkanth, he becomes irritated. Anandmayi, the Chandravanshi princess, clarifies that there was also a similar legend that Neelkanth would approach to save their property by launching an attack on the "evil" Suryavanshis. Shiva is completely perturbed and perplexed up on hearing this. He goes to the well-known Ram sanctuary in Ayodhya, Swadweep's capital, with Sati. There, he has a philosophical conversation with the cleric about his destiny, karma, and the choices he makes every day that will control him in the future. As Shiva emerges from the sanctuary, he sees Sati being followed by a Naga almost a tree.

### Conclusion

Shiva also goes by the names Mahesh, Mahadev, Parmeshwar, and Mahakaal, which literally translate to "the Great God" or "the Ultimate God and the Ultimate Destroyer," in addition to the attributed names listed here. He is also known as Bholenath, which means "the innocent one," Shankar, which means "the transformed one," Shambhu, which means "self-created one," Hara, which means "the remover of obstacles," Sadashiva, which means "the permanent/perpetuating Shiva," Parvathinaath, which means "Master of Parvati," "the daughter of Parvat or mountain," Nandish, which means "the god of Nandi," Ramesh "Shiv Sahastra Naam," which translates to "thousand names of Shiva," is a mantra that his devotees frequently chant.

Shiva is frequently referred to as someone who would rather remain outside of culture. He belongs more to nature than to culture. He is ferocious and unflinching, kind and cruel, protector and destroyer, household lover and "Sanyasi" (ascetic). He is the only one who does not have a family, but he is the only one who does. Additionally, he is associated with "Aum" (the universe). He is regarded as both the creator and the product. Shiva resides in the Himalayan region known as "Kailash." The mountain known as Himalaya, which means "the house of ice," is always covered in snow. It literally translates to "ice house." As a result, he is known as "Kailashnath" or "Kailaspathi," which means "master of Kailash." He spends his time surrounded by dead people and ghosts. He covers himself with ash. He is the one who has forsaken all of life's luxuries and pleasures. He has no interest in making merry. He safeguards those who have been neglected or orphaned. Parvati, Shiva's wife, is referred to as "Annapoorna," which means "who feeds all." "Tantric" practices are held to be true by the Aghori Shaivism sect. They consume cannabis. Additionally, it is believed that Shiva is the one who uses marijuana. He indulges with a wide range of individuals. He doesn't follow any one set of rules. He is a family man as well as an ascetic. He adores everyone, including his family. He lives with his family and experiences "Samadhi" for years with them. He does what he wants and also for the good of humanity. Both the

creation and the creator are him. He takes pleasure in worldly pleasures but ignores them. He shields everyone and despises no one.

### Reference:-

#### **Tripathi, Amish.**

The Immortals of Meluha (2010)

The Secret of the Nagas (2011)

The Oath of the Vayuputras (2013)

Amish Tripathi's Shiva Trilogy." International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts. Vol 6 Issue 2 April (2018).

Seven Secrets of Shiva. New Delhi: Penguin Books India,2007.

Krishnakumar, K. (interviewer) &Tripathi A. (Interviewee). (2011). Shiva in a New Light an Interview with Amish Tripathi, Retrieved from <http://www.sparkthemagazine.com/?p=2199>

Cormer, John, "Narrative". Critical Ideas in Television Studies.(47–59) New York:

Charendon Press,2007.Doty,William.Myth:A Handbook.Westport:Greenwood, 2004.

Dundes, Alan."Binary Opposition in Myth: The Propp/Levi-Strauss Debate in Retrospect". Western Folklore, 1997

Correspondent, S. (2022) Treks to Kullar Caves in Jawadhu Hills near Pollur in the works, The Hindu. Available at: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/treks-to-kullar-caves-in-jawadhu-hills-near-pollur-in-the-works/article65906441.ece> (Accessed: February 11, 2023).

"About Amish". Author Amish. Archived from the original on 15 October 2016. Retrieved 18 March 2017.

"HarperCollins acquires global rights to Amish's new book, backlist". The Financial Express. 31 May 2022. Retrieved 15 August 2022.

"Amish's six fiction books in the HT-Nielsen BookScan Top 10". www.adgully.com. 5 August 2019.

India, HarperCollins Publishers. "HarperCollins India to publish Amish Tripathi and Bhavna Roy's new book - IDOLS: Unearthing the Power of Murti Puja". www.prnewswire.com (Press release). Retrieved 24 January 2024.