

A STUDY OF THE NOVEL 'THE IMMORTALS OF MELUHA' IN AMISH TRIPATHI'S SHIVA TRILOGY

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Abstract

This paper aims at the textual analysis of 'Immortals of Meluha' which is part one of the Shiva Trilogy which is the act of retelling of Indian mythology. Amish Tripathi builds his Shiva Trilogy mainly on Lord Shiva and partly on Lord Brahma and Lord Vishnu. In this Novel, the Shiva was envisaged as a savior of Suryavanshis as well as Chandravanshis though Shiva helped Suryavanshis in the battle with Chandravanshis. There were many social issues in the novel like vikrama people, natural pollution, Sati system, caste system, class system, widow remarriage, untouchability, etc. In this novel, Shiva has been characterized as a human being or a common man who belonged to a simple tribe of mount Kailash raised to divinity or deity by his thoughts and deeds. In this novel, the author narrated the journey of Shiva from mount Kailash in Tibet to Ayodhya via Meluha and Devagiri. All Suryavanshis and chandravanshis have been waiting for a person with blue throat to save their countries. Mount Mandar was famous for manufacturing Somras which is being given to Meluhans not only for their long life but also gives them their mental and physical strength to live. In this novel ruler Ram is God for both the Suryavanshis and Chandravanshis. Mainly Meluhans believe in the concept of Karma and the effects of previous birth on the present life. Shiva was influenced by Suryavanshis to get a feeling that Chandravanshis are evil and they should be corrected by Neelkanth, the name given to shiva due to his natural blue throat. This novel reminds us of the characters around 1800 years B.C and the ruler Ram is said to be earlier to 1250 years B.C. At that time women enjoyed equal status to that of men. Women were recruited into the army and enjoyed autonomy and independence. Many myths like the blue throat of Neelkanth, Somaras, or amritham have been reinterpreted in retelling Indian mythology throughout the writing. The Hindu triumvirate consists of three Gods, Brahma, Vishnu, and shiva who were believed to be responsible for the creation, preservation, and destruction of mankind, are shown as perfect human beings in this novel. Speculation is that it might have collapsed due to the depletion of the Saraswati river.

Keywords: Saviour, Bluethroat, Somras, Vikrama people, mythology, Social issues

Introduction

Most Indian myths have been derived from epic poems like Mahabharata and Ramayana, as well as from the ancient Puranas. Kali Yuga era started in 3102 BC when Lord Krishna left the earth for his heavenly abode after the great Mahabharata War and thus began the degeneration of human civilization. In this dark age, the average human lifespan is the shortest and around 70 years whereas, in the first era of Satya Yuga, life expectancy was around 4,000 years. The last age in the ever-repeating cycle of Maha Yuga is the Kaliyuga which is the shortest, lasting for 432,000 human years. The current time-period falls under Kali Yuga, and it is also referred to as the Iron Age. The Kaliyuga represents hypocrisy and instability not seen before. Hinduism became a popular reference only during the 19th and 20th centuries when English colonial rule saw rapid expansion in India. Evidence also shows that an ascetic god named Siva was popularly worshiped by the Indus Valley civilization around 3000 BC. In the world, the Saraswati, Egypt and Mesopotamian civilizations are the most ancient civilizations.

Indian Mythology is one of the fundamental aspects of Indian Culture, which glorifies it further and makes it a unique one in the world. These mythological stories, which form the backbone of Indian mythology, are a great medium for people especially parents to inculcate interest in Indian Culture in the younger generation and to impart values of Indian culture to them. Storytelling is the best medium for conveying all types of messages. The stories in Indian mythology vary from subtle maxim conveying tales of Panchatantra and Jataka-tales to subtle life paradigm defining stories from the Bhagavadgita, Ramayana, and Mahabharata. There are usually multiple stories with multiple versions explaining about fact or occasion or festival. In this way, stories have been passed from generation to generation which is the result of natural evolution.

Nowadays there is a common practice of retelling mythical stories involving the reconstruction of major and minor characters of stories along with the element of fiction or fantasy by the context in modernizing Indian myths. Amish Tripathi's novel 'The Immortals of Meluha' is a perfect example of a retelling of Indian mythology. In Shashi Tharoor's 'The Great Indian Novel', the author had correlated the characters of Mahabharata to the characters associated with political parties of independent India to leave the scope to further research to identify and analyze all the characters of his novel whereas Amish Tripathi had incorporated the principal names of Shiv Puran directly into his novel Shiva Trilogy made easier to common people to understand and leave the scope to concentrate on the main story. Recently many writers have been thinking to bring Indian mythology closer to the common man. Aiming at the common man, they have been fictionalizing gods in human form. Amish's Shiva trilogy is a mythical fantasy based on the assumption of the mythical God Shiva in a human form.

In this novel, there are two ancient Kingdoms described one Meluha whose citizens are known as Suryavanshis, and the other Swadweep whose citizens are called Chandravanshis.

Meluha has now represented the area from Pakistan to Delhi including Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, and Haryana. Swadweep is now the area from Uttarakhand to Bangladesh including Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Sikkim, Assam, and Meghalaya. It is only imagination because the author of the novel had described the areas based on rivers.

The shiva Trilogy-Part 1 consists of twenty-six chapters, which are being summarized below.

The Immortals of Meluha

He has come

Shiva is known to be Mahadev, the God of gods, destroyer of evil, passionate lover, ferocious warrior, superb dancer, and charismatic leader. Meluha, the land of pure life is the richest and most powerful empire in India and maybe in the world. Gunas fight almost every month with pakratias for their as well as village existence next to the holy lake, Manasarovar. Pakratias was becoming stronger every year forming new alliances with new tribes. Bhadra is the main person in the Guna tribe and is a good friend of Shiva and they share chillum. A big fight between Gunas under the leadership of Shiva and Pakratias under the leadership of Yakhya was taken place. Nandi came from Srinagar of Kashmir (Meluha) to take Shiva to Meluha and helped Gunas in the battle. The battle was in favour of the Gunas. Nandi requested Shiva to leave the prisoners of Pakratias to show that Guna tribe is better than Pakratias. Nandi was a captain in Meluha. Lady Ayurvati is a doctor in Meluha. Chitraangadh was an orientation executive.

Land of pure life

Brahmins are talented people and given professions like Doctors, Teachers, Lawyers, Priests, and any intellectual profession. Kshatriyas are the warriors and rulers. Vaishyas are craftsmen, traders, and businesspeople and the Shudras are the farmers and workers. And one caste cannot do another caste's job. Women are also allowed into the Army. Chenardwaj was Governor and feels that Shiva is as quickly as recognized by the empire as the true Neelkanth.

She enters his life

Shiva saved Sati's life along with kritika by fighting with unknown people, later known as Nagas. Sati, a native of Devagiri is a daughter of Daksha Prajapathi, the emperor of Meluha.

Abode of the Gods

In "Aum" symbol devised by Lord Bharat, the top half in white represents the chandravanshis who are unlawful, dishonest, and careless people with no rules, morals or honor, selfish people and corrupt kings, cowards who never attack like principled Kshatriyas and the bottom half in red represent the Suryavanshis. The amalgam of these two is the emergent common path represented in orange. The crescent moon to the right of the symbol was the pre-existing Chandravanshis symbol. And the Sun above it was the pre-existing Suryavanshis symbol.

Daksha, an emperor, and Kanakhala, high chosen tribe 'pigeons' amongst the Brahmins, the lady prime minister of Devagiri recognized Shiva as Neelkanth because of his natural blue colored throat who would be the savior of Meluhans to make the end of Chandravanshi crisis once and for all.

Tribe of Brahma

Shiva met Sati in the dancing room and explained about dance saying a dance without 'bhav' (inner feeling or heart feeling or soul feeling) like a body without a soul. A delighted Shiva immediately moved to the center of the stage and started dancing with Nataraj pose, aligned his energy to the universal energy so that the dance emerges on its own', not for the audience, for the appreciation, and the music but only for himself. If anyone needs energy for everything that comes from people, from objects, from Mother Earth herself-one has to ask for it respectfully.

The somras was invented many thousands of years ago by one of the greatest Indian scientists, Lord Brahma who did not give the somras freely to everyone instead of giving them to a select group of adolescent boys, known as Saptrishi, who were practically given an additional life known as the dwija or twice born. They had to use their skills to perform the tasks of priests, teachers, doctors, amongst other intellectual professions where they could use their powers to help the society. Over the ages, the saptrishis and their followers came to be known as the tribe of Brahma or simply the Brahmins'. In earlier days, somras were given to higher chosen tribe Brahmins like the eagles, peacocks, and the swans but in Daksh's regime, the somras were given to everybody. This change must have happened due to the revolution. In earlier days, Lord Shri Ram's ideas and leadership transformed the society of Meluha dramatically.

Vikarma, the carriers of bad fate

Though Parvateswar does not want to break the law regarding Shiva's marriage with Sati, called Parvati, also known to be God's daughter of Parvateswar, Daksha is ready for the happiness of sati even to break the law for the same. In this context, it is remembered that Sati is a Vikram woman.

Vikrama people are untouchable, punished in this birth for the sins of their previous birth had to live the present life without dignity, and tolerate their present sufferings with grace. Shiva wanted to abolish the concept of Vikrama in this country. There was a caste system developed in the country. Shiva asked Daksha that 'did that also mean that there could have been a person talented enough to be a Brahmin but if he were born to Shudra's parents, he would not get the opportunity to become a Brahmin'.

Lord Ram created a practical system in which all pregnant women migrate to Maika city and delivered their babies and come back to their city without their child. All children are put into the Meluhan gurukul to give all the benefits equally including drinking of Somras. At the age of fifteen, when they have reached adulthood, all the children take a comprehensive

examination whose results will decide which varna or caste the child will be allocated to- Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya or Shudra'. And then the children are given one more year's case-specific training and asked to wear their varna color bands-white for Brahmins, red for Kshatriyas, green for Vyshyas, and black for Shudras and retreat to the respective caste schools to complete their education. Shiva delighted in listening that 'Each person is given a position in society based only on his abilities and as a result the percentage of higher castes going up in the population. Many upper castes like Brahmins, Kshatriya, and Vyshya opposed Lord Ram's reforms, and those from among the surmounted who survived are the Chandravanshis.

Shiva touched Sati, Vikrama woman who has given birth to a stillborn child and whose husband died in the Narmada river accident, in explaining his style of dance and is asked to undergo shudhikaran, denied by Shiva.

Lord Ram's unfinished task

Daksha agreed with the belief of Shiva about the non-existence of perfect society but the existence of a near-perfect society. Daksha felt that Suryavanshis take care of everyone in their country makes Chandravanshis inconsolable because they do not take care of their people and jealous of Suryavanshis and diverting Saraswati river useful in the production of Somras manufactured at Mount Mandar and frequently attacking Suryavanshis indirectly. Shiva felt that his tribe used to face a lot of jealousy in Mount Kailash by Pakratas, the barbarians will not do such shameful acts.

Daksha too agreed about avoiding war as far as possible and worried only about the flow of the Saraswati which has been gradually disappearing for the last half-century. Daksha told Shiva that his army is less in number when compared to Swadweepan's army because of the Maika system and has superior technology regarding warfare but agreed with Shiva that war is the ultimate resort to take action on Chandravanshis because of their ill behavior.

Lord Ram quotes

"A person's character is not tested in good times. It is only in bad times that a person shows how steadfast he is to his dharma"---(113, The Immortals of Meluha)

Daksha told Shiva that they want to save them from the evil philosophy that infects their soul. They want to save them from their traitorous rules, from their depressed and meaningless existence. And this can be done by giving them the benefits of the superior Suryavanshi way of life. Once they become like Suryavanshis, there will be no reason to fight and live like brothers. This is the unfinished task of his father and Lord Ram.

Daksha pleaded that when the problems become irresistible for ordinary men, the Neelkanth will appear. And that he will destroy the evil Chandravanshis and restore the forces of good. Shiva remembered his uncle's words that "your destiny lies beyond the mountains.

Whether you fulfill it or run away once again, is up to you". (1) Shiva decided to take the side of Meluhans in removing the evil of Chandravanshis. Shiva was confused in the future course of action and he wanted to change the minds of Chandravanshis but not eliminating them by killing in the war.

Shiva and his tribes were administered somras without knowing them or without telling them. But Shiva realized that somras will cause positive effects and triggers the immediate occurrence of these diseases, which when treated never occur. Hence, the body remains healthy till death, and Shiva and his tribe are healthier now. Shiva has put few conditions in front of Daksha to help them in eliminating the evil of swadweepans. The First one is bringing his tribe 'Gunas' to Meluha. The Second one is inviting migrants to Meluha. The Third one is taking measures to give normal life to Vikrama people. The Fourth one is allowing him to visit Somras production center. The Fifth one is not announcing the arrival of Neelkanth because he has a feeling that when people know he is the Neelkanth, every action and his word will be over-interpreted and over-analyzed.

Drink of the Gods

Shiva felt that this entire concept of Vikrama is ridiculous and his journey in this life was incomplete without her. Mount Mandar and travelers to it were protected by Arishtaneni, an elite team of soldiers. It is impossible to know the location of Mount Mandar except for Arishtaneni soldiers or any authorized person by the Emperor.

Shiva, Kanakhala, and Nandi met Brahaspati, swan tribe among Brahmins who is the chief scientist of the empire, who recognized Shiva as a Neelkanth and who is behind the manufacture of the Somras for the entire country and leader to research in many other fields at Mount Mandar. He felt that Brahaspati is a very select chosen tribe among Brahmins. Daksha and his royal family members, his wife Veerni and his daughter Sati, with the protection of the Arishtaneni group, have reached Mount Mandar in one out of five carriages.

Out of two persons, one was a hooded figure the main person, and another one was Vishwadyumna who was hired by the earlier one who came into the picture for the kidnap of one of the main members of the royal family especially Sati.

Shiva is interested to know about the working function of Somras from Brahaspati who explained that Lord Brahma invented the somras which when consumed reacts with the oxidants, absorbs them, and then expels them from the body as sweat or urine (1). It seems that Somras removes the oxidants from the body. The crushed branches of the sanjeevani tree had to be churned with the waters of the Saraswati river before the processing of Somras begins.

Love and its consequences

Shiva told Brahaspati that he is supposed to be the one who will complete Lord Ram's unfinished task and destroy the evil of Chandravanshis. Brahaspati warned Shiva that he will probably face a lot of pressure in the coming days because of his blue throat and the blind faith

of people and the consequences of his decisions. When Shiva looked at Sati his breath went out of him as he looked at his life staring back at him. His heartbeat an anxious rhythm. He was in a world where the only sound was the harmonious melody of Sati's heavy breathing. Shiva, Veerni, Sati, and Nandi departed for Devagiri along with a hundred Arishtaneni soldiers. Daksha wants Shiva to fight with Chandravanshis to eradicate day to day problem with them. But Parvateswar immediately felt that it is unfair using Daksha's daughter as an attraction. Daksha felt that Sati may find comfort and happiness with the Lord (Shiva).

Daksha wanted to give suryavanshis' way of life to the people of Swadweepans to attract them from swadweepan rulers. Daksha believed that if Sati is with the Neelkanth, then there is no way he would refuse to lead us against the Chandravanshis and Neelakanth needs motivation and the belief in himself will emerge when he gets closer to Sati. When Neelkanth thinks that he wants to be proud of Sati by doing a little bit for the sake of her, he will favor us as the savior of Meluhans. Daksha finally said that the most powerful force in a woman's life is the need to be appreciated, loved, and cherished for what she is.

The Hooded figure returns

Vishwadyumna and Hooded figure of Nagas when came to nearer to the carriage of the royal family who was traveling from Mount Mandar to Devagiri, Hooded figure told Vishwadyumna to keep an eye on Shiva who countered the last attack on Sati.

The Caravan had been stopped for lunch in the dense forest where the attack from any side was impossible. Forty Chandravanshi soldiers led by a Hooded figure walked slowly towards the suryavanshi caravan and asked them to surrender the Princess and leave. When the hooded figure without listening to shiva gave the last warning and came closer to Caravan, Sati suddenly broke through the barrier and attacked the hooded figure. Within no time Arishtaneni charged at the Chandravanshis like dangerous tigers. when Suryavanshis killed nearly nine chandravanshis, the Hooded figure felt that the war was in favour of Suryavanshis and retreated along with other chandravanshi soldiers.

Neelkanth unveiled

Daksha spoke that the Nagas are cursed people born with tremendous power and skills and huge deformities and diseases in the present birth as a punishment for terrible crimes that they have committed in their previous birth. Daksha requested Shiva to help them because his family and his people are in danger. He also requested Shiva to permit to announce his presence to the court and the people so that the people will get moral boosts up and Shiva accepted the proposal of Daksha regarding the announcement of his presence to the people. Daksha announced to the people at the court that there was another terrorist attack by chandravanshis to harm the royal family of Suryavanshis on the road from Mount Mandar to Devagiri. For the first time in decades past a cowardly terrorist attack had been beaten back. Daksha continued to say that it is because of the time for justice, truth to victory and we were led by Father Manu's messenger. Daksha raised his hand and said jubilantly by that the gossips regarding the arrival of

saviour, Neelkanth. The Neelkanth has come. Shiva removed his cravat on the royal platform. The Meluhan elite crowded around him and said that they did not believe them to be true and they did not fear any way and the days of evil are numbered. They enquire Shiva where about of his place, Mount Kailash. A few hours later Shiva, Sati, Parvateswar, Brahaspati, Ayurvati, Kritika, Nandi and Veerbhadra, 1500 soldiers, 25 handmaidens and 50 support staff for their security and comfort planned to travel to visit Kotdwar on the Beas river, Karachapa, port city, Lothal city in the land delta of the Saraswati and then back to devagiri.

Journey through Meluha

Brahaspati said that Lord Manu was accepted to be a forefather of our civilization by all the people of India including Swadeepan. He lived more than eight and a half thousand years ago. He is a Prince of South India in which the land is spread beyond the Narmada river, where the earth ends, and the great ocean begins known as Sangamtamil. Lord Manu's family, Pandyas had ruled the Sangamtamil where some kings were corrupt and spent their luxurious life throughout their regime forgetting their duties and spiritual life. Later, he led a band of his followers to the northern, higher lands in a fleet of ships. He established his first camp at Mehragarh in the western mountains of present-day Meluha. Ultimately, he gave up his princely robes and became a priest. Pandit is derived from Lord Manu's family name 'Pandya'. When they arrived at Mehragarh, they have seen the floods of sea tides which became stronger due to the monsoon. Waters stopped advancing due to prayers of Lord Manu though the sea does not retreat and still covers the ancient Sangamtamil cities. Lord Manu and his followers came down from the mountains after the advancing of the sea has stopped. They also witnessed the Indus river and six great rivers had emerged as Indus, Saraswati, Yamuna, Ganga, Sarayu, and the Brahmaputra excepting already existed Narmada. With the rise in temperatures, Himalayas began to melt creating the rivers. Villages and later cities grew on the banks of these rivers, Sapt-Sindhu was born out of the destruction of the Sangamtamil. The laws of Manu are all listed in an extensive treatise called the Manusmriti.

The hooded figure and Vishwadyumna saved two women from a crocodile attack in the river. The women felt that Nagas have come to eat them and shouted. One of the two women ran away with shouting to expect help from others. The Hooded figure and Vishwadyumna left the woman to her fate and went off. Shiva and Parvateshwar had rescued and sent the two women to their respective homes with the help of soldiers. Veerbhadra started singing along with dance with a six-step dancing style rhythmically one of his favourite songs now joined by Shiva, Nandi, Brahaspati, Ayurvati, and Kritika.

Blessing of the impure

Shiva addressed 65,000 Kotdwaarans outside the city platform speaking to them that he would do all he could support the people of Meluha. People felt that the Neelkanth will destroy Chandravanshis and may reimpose Lord Ram's rule everywhere it is needed. There was a blind man amongst people who bent down to try and touch Shiva's feet. The blind man who is a

Vikrama and not supposed to touch non-vikrama persons felt sorry and showed his patriotism towards the country by requesting Shiva to save his country from Chandravanshis. Neelkanth touched the feet of the vikrama father (the blind man) and father of Drapaku and asked blessings to get the strength to fight for a man as patriotic as the blind man who ultimately ended his sayings with Vijayibhav(Victory).

Brihaspati said that how Sati became a Vikrama woman. Around ninety years ago, she was married to Chandandhwaj. She delivered a stillborn child. On the same day, her husband accidentally drowned in the Narmada river and she has declared a vikrama woman on the same day because she gave birth to a stillborn child. Shiva said that the concept of vikrama is unfair. Noble families were permitted to keep their birth children with them. Some laws can be amended, provided ninety percent of the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and Vaishyas above a particular chosen tribe and job status vote for the change. Only Lord Satyadwaj, the grandfather of Parvateshwar opposed this change. They visited the city of Sutgengarh on the Indus. Then he visited the famous city Mohan Jo Daro or the platform of Mohan dedicated to a great philosopher-priest called Lord Mohan. Though the Governor of Mohan Jo Daro had offered to accompany the Lord Neelkanth there, he did not allow them and went to the temple alone.

Pandit of Mohan Jo Daro

Shiva met Panditji at Mohan Jo Daro temple alone. Panditji remembered Lord Ram's way of life. Some laws help a society change slowly and allow it to remain stable and it allows its citizens the freedom to follow their dreams. He created an ideal balance between stability and flexibility. Shiva disagreed with Lord Ram's concept of vikrama and he didn't believe the misfortune in this birth is due to his sins in his previous birth. Panditji was in favour of Lord Ram's philosophy that vikrama people are not excluded, getting subsidies from the Government, interact with the family members, free to achieve personal excellence in their chosen fields, fight to protect themselves, and can't influence others. After knowing about the Vikrama concept, Shiva felt that the Vikrama system is completely unfair. And he has heard that almost one-twentieth of the people in Meluha are vikrama. He also felt that the system needs to change. Panditji said that in Lord Ram's time, Manthara, the helper of queen Kikai influenced the queen and entire kingdom and caused the loss of millions of lives because she suffered from physical deformities which led to mass destruction. Nandi and Veerbhadra talked about Shiva and Sati standing out-side the temple. Sati and Kritika talked about Shiva's finest, intelligent, brave, funny, and kind behaviour.

After two weeks, Neelkanth's convoy reached the Karachapa city at Indus and the western sea. Lord Brahmanayak, Emperor and Daksha's father had appointed Vaishya cast Jhooleshwar as a Governor over hundred years ago keeping in mind that he is the wisest and most efficient Governor. Mesopotamians and Egyptians were allowed into this liberal city for trading.

There was a plan of the governor to organize 'Yagna' ceremonial fire-worship the next day in honour of the Neelkanth under the auspicious of Lord Varun and the legendary Ashwini Kumar twins who were celebrated ancient mariner who had navigated ocean routes from Meluha to Mesopotamia and beyond.

Trial by fire

Shiva woke up sweating and felt that it is his dream. Jhooleshwar received Shiva at the head of the Yagna platform and guided him to his ritual seat at the Yagna. Sati was not allowed to go to the yagna platform and allowed to sit at a safe distance from the platform to look after the proceedings. Pandit asked, "if anybody here has any objection to this yagna, please speak now". (1) Tarak, an immigrant from ultra-conservative northwest regions of the empire, being Kshatriya, a giant man with an immense stomach, moral police stood up and objected to the presence of Kshatriya princess Sati being a vikrama women on the same platform while a yagna is being conducted. To keep the yagna legal, Sati should either move to another platform of the city or outside the city walls. Sati immediately came into the picture, said sorry, and wanted to leave the city immediately along with Kritika and her bodyguards and Nandi and Veerbhadra to accompany her for her safety. Sati challenged Tarak to fight with her to pass through Agnipariksha. Tarak accepted the challenge and selected a knife for the fight, advice given by Shiva. Sati fought with Tarak in such a way in which Tarak collapsed onto the ground and motionless. Sati unintentionally behaved like a goddess forgives Tarak.

The Sun and Earth

Doctors had taken Tarak to the hospital and saved his life. Parvateshwar said to Shiva that there was another terrorist attack in a village fifty kilometers away from Mohan Jo Daro. Shiva, Parvateshwar, Sati, Kritika, Nandi, and Veerabhadra with a seven-carriage convoy had journeyed just a few days away from Karachappa. When the convoy was halted to see the peculiar situation, Brigadier Vraka came from the opposite side, met Parvateshwar, and informed that some villagers escaped from terrorist attacks and came here to take help from us.

The Battle of Koonj

Five hundred Chandravanshi soldiers led by five Nagas attacked the village people and asked all to leave the village except Brahmins in the temple. He climbed the carriage pedestal to stand tall to address the gathering and revealed that he is Neelkanth and can easily fight with supernatural and bloodthirsty Nagas not to encourage terrorism in the country. Suddenly the scared villagers and Suryavanshi soldiers were transformed into a righteous army and stormed into Koonj. Before reaching Koonj, the terrorists killed all the Brahmins including Main Pandit, destroyed the temple, and set aflame. The Suryavanshi people charged the terrorists like cracked bulls. One of the Nagas had released poisoned agniban or the fire arrow aiming at Shiva's neck. Immediately Sati had come between agniban and Shiva. The agniban slammed into her chest with a vicious force, pushing her airborne body backward. They killed all Nagas and some

chandravanshi soldiers. Ayurvati had already seen Sati's injured body. Some Chandravanshis retreated in haste. Ayurvati was taking care of Sati to cure her at any cost.

Doctor Ayurvati told Shiva that nobody in history has survived from the injury caused by poisoned agniban whose poison starts causing an internal fever that will result in the degrading of one organ after another. She also tells Shiva that she can only give some medicines to make the end easier. Fever is the main problem and if it is controlled then it will come back even stronger once medicines are stopped. Ayurvati dressed Shiva's wounds. Sati widened her eyes a bit to take shiva as she could and told Shiva that he spent the happiest moments in her life for the last few months.

Sati and the fire arrow

Shiva requested Ayurvati to give Somras to Sati claiming that somras not only work on the oxidants but also work on injuries. Ayurvati had administered a strong dose of somras into Sati's body. Ayurvati said that this is a miracle and Lord's faith that has kept sati alive. All the traces of the toxic substances were removed by somras. Keeping the unbelievable behaviour of human beings in the mind, Lord Ram instituted a system where a Rajya sabha, the ruling council, consisting of all Brahmins and Kshatriyas of a specific rank was created. Whenever the Emperor died or took Sanyas, the council would meet and elect a new Emperor from amongst Kshatriyas of the rank of brigadier or above. Though Sati's father was a son of Brahmanayak, he was elected Emperor of Meluha and not by family succession. Brahamanayak followed the Meluha rules and did not help his son whereas Lord Briga helped Daksha a great deal in his election. Daksha, veerni, and Kankhala accompanied by two thousand soldiers, had immediately left Devagiri and sailed down the Saraswati river and then had ridden night and day to reach Koonj.

Daksha overjoyed to see her daughter safe and he was proud of all of the people who helped Sati. Daksha is also pleased to fight back a terrorist attack. Daksha thanked Shiva for fighting with Chandravanshi for the Meluhan people. Daksha made a marriage proposal to offer Sati to Shiva. Daksha revealed the secret of Sati who has become vikrama due to giving birth to stillborn children decades back. Though it is not a serious crime of Sati, it could have been due to the past life karma of the child's father. But the law of land holds that both the father and the mother be blamed for the misfortune. Shiva bent down, picked up Sati's hand gently, brought to his lips and kissed it lovingly, and whispered that he will never let go of her. Daksha hugged Shiva tightly and thrillingly. Ayurvati and Kanakhala congratulated the Emperor, the Queen, Shiva, and sati for the marriage proposal. Nandi, Kritika, and Veerbhadra joined and expressed their joy. Daksha said to Kanakhala to make a proclamation to be signed by the Neelkanth, saying that from now onwards any noblewoman who gives birth to a stillborn child will not be classified as vikrama. But Shiva abolished the law for the entire Nation. Parvateshwar appreciated Shiva about his principles which match Lord Shri Ram's principles.

Love realised

The Meluhans were not only celebrating the marriage ceremony between the Neelkanth and their princess but they were also celebrating the massive defeat of the horrible terrorists at Kunj. This puja was followed by the formal marriage ceremony of Shiva and Sathi. Veerbhadra asked Shiva to permit to marry Kritika as it is the custom of their tribe. Brihaspati had blessed Sati 'Akhand Saubhagyavati bhav'(her husband always be alive and by her side) when Brahaspati visited them at that moment and took the blessings from him by touching his feet.

Preparation of war

Shiva, Parvateshwar, Sati, Nandi, and Veerbhadra accompanied by a brigade of fifteen hundred cavalries went to Mount Mandir to fight with forecasted attackers. Mandar along with the science building had been ruthlessly destroyed. It was impossible to even identify the dead. Parini, one of the assistants of chief scientist Brihaspati said to General Parvateshwar that the entire blast is due to Somras which is unstable during their preparation process and stabled by Saraswati waters which our chief scientist wanted to stabilize somras with less water by the material imported. It was one of the Brahaspati's dreamed projects and revealed that this is due to an accident by the risky experiment. Shiva suddenly saw a bracelet made of leather burnt at the edges, its back-hold destroyed. He felt that was the bracelet of the hooded figure and thought that the hooded figure killed Brahaspati. On the advice of Prime Minister Kanakhala and the Meluhan council, Daksha sent diplomats to Emperor Dilipa and requested him to surrender the terrorists and then can threaten war. Shiva proposed using arrows during the war and wants to give training to five thousand soldiers to make them into archers to fire arrows in the direction of the chandravanshi army every two seconds for ten minutes, to break their irregulars to show the effect on war as that of the elephants in the last war. Shiva explained about the creation of a tortoise with the shields holding against any attack, much like a tortoiseshell, the enemy will not be able to through, but our spears will cut into them. Shiva raised his Trishul designed by him. Army metallurgy team had been assigned this work. With the advice of Shiva Vikrama people led by Drapaku, a son of a blind man has been recruited into the Suryavanshi army.

Empire of evil

Daksha received a letter from Dilipa, read, and handed it over to Kankhala who read it aloud.

“Emperor Daksha, Suryavanshi liege, protector of Meluha, please accept my deep condolences for the dastardly attack on Mount Mandar. Such a senseless assault on peaceful Brahmins cannot but be condemned in the strongest of terms. We are shocked that any denizen of India would stoop to such levels. It is, therefore, with surprise and sadness that I read your letter. I assure you that neither me nor anyone in my command has anything to do with this devious attack. Hence, I had to inform you, with regret that there is nobody I can hand over to you. I hope that you understand the sincerity of this letter and will not make a hasty decision which may have regrettable consequences for you. I assure you of my empire's full support in the investigation of this outrage. Please do inform us as to how can be of assistance to you in bringing the criminals to justice. This letter was signed by Dilipa”. (325, *The Immortals of Meluha*)

The Suryavanshis declared the war and moved towards the Chandravanshi army camp close to Dharmaket. Drapaku was assigned that he with five thousand soldiers will face the battle at the Northern pass against the Chandravanshis detachment and hold them for one day so that the main army can fight. Vidyunmali sliced his thumb across the blade and smeared his blood across Drapaku's brow signifying that his blood will protect him. Finally, Shiva decided to fight against Chandravanshis.

Dharmayudh, the holy war

Suryavanshis were arranged like a bow. The tortoise regiments had been placed at the center. The light infantry formed the flanks while the cavalry bordered them. The archer regiments remained stationed at the back and their presence was hidden from the chandravanshis.

Parvateshwar announced that Lord Shiva will lead the right flank which was under vraka's command. Shiva addressed Meluhans saying

“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”.

I am a Mahadev.

“I am not the only one. I see a hundred thousand Mahadevs in front of me. I see a hundred thousand men willing to fight on the side of good! I see a hundred thousand men willing to battle evil! I see a hundred thousand men capable of destroying evil”. (345, *The Immortals of Meluha*)

Now there is a sequence of voices screaming in air written below,

Shiva spoke clearly ‘Har Ek Hai Mahadev’.

Meluhans stood astounded that Every single one a Mahadev.

Shiva bellowed ‘Har Har Mahadev’.

Meluhans roared ‘All of us are Mahadevs!’

Suryavanshi army cried Har Har Mahadev. Shiva responded ‘Har HarMahadev’ All of us are Gods. And gods on a mission to destroy evil. The suryavanshis bellowed after their Lord. ‘Har Har Mahadev’. The cry sent the air ‘Har Har Mahadev’. The long spelled of evil would end today. Har Har Mahadev.

Five thousand archers flooded death on the chandravanshis as the sky turned black with a screen of arrows. The arrows penetrated the leather and wooden shields of the irregular Chandravanshi soldiers. Within no time, the first regiment of irregulars had begun to break their line and surrender precious ground. The irregulars confused and started running back. Archers raised the height of their stool and drew their arrows and let fly. The arrows hit the second regiment of the Chandravanshis. As Shiva noticed the move of Chandravanshis and anticipated by Parvateshwar, they had positioned two cavalries, led by Mayashrenik and Vidyunmali, on the flanks. As directed by Lord Shiva, Parvateshwar rapidly prepared his horse and rode to his command on the left. Shiva followed by Vraka, Nandi, and Veerbhadra rode to the right. Prasanjit geared his tortoise corps in the center for the attack. The tortoise corps moved in their

slow, merciless pace towards the Chandravanshi center. The sides of the bow formation moved quicker than the center. Dead bodies of Chandravanshis did not allow them in forming their traditional chaturanga formation. The unstoppable tortoise corps tore ruthlessly into the Chandravanshi center. The Neelkanth charged into the sides of the Chandravanshi's lines that were bearing down on the tortoises. The Chandravanshi army had been comprehensively routed.

A stunning revelation

Daksha had sent his guards to arrest Dilipa who is brought there like a common criminal and reveals to him how kind Meluha can be and how Meluha looks all the people equal. Dilipa asked Daksha what he expects from Chandravanshis. Daksha expects Yamuna waters back and wants to give back something in return. Daksha made Parvateshwar as viceroy of Swadweep empire and Dilipa will continue to be virtual Head, will ensure corrupt people of Chandravanshis are brought in line with the Meluhan way of life and live together as brothers now onwards. After seeing Shiva's throat, Dilipa's eyes reflected the surprised agony of a child who had just been stabbed from behind by his father, shocked, tried to say something but he was speechless. At the exit, he turned around to look at Shiva once again with few tears. It seems that Dilipa is broken. Drapaku lost his arm, eye, and half of his team of soldiers.

Parvateshwar introduced Shiva to Anandamayi, a daughter of Dilipa, as a Lord and asked Anandamayi to give respect to him in speaking or calling or addressing him. Anandamayi replied that they are waiting for their Lord whose throat will turn blue when he drinks somras, who will not come from sapt Sindhu, neither Suryavanshi nor Chandravanshi and will come to Swadweep to destroy the evil of Suryavanshis. But when he comes to people he will come on our side. Anandamayi noticed Shiva's cravat covered throat and asked repeatedly Shiva about his covered throat and who is he. Shiva looked into Anandamayi's tormented eyes. The pain they conveyed lashed his soul. The flames of agony burned his conscience. In a broken voice, she whispered that Shiva is supposed to be on their side. Shiva melted and whispered what he has done to Chandravanshis.

Island of the individual

Parvateshwar, Shiva, Sati, Nandi, Veerbhadra, Anandamayi, and soldiers traveled along a feeble, long winding road to the Ganga and then sailed eastward to the point where the mighty river welcomed the waters of the Sarayu. Then they had sailed north, up the Sarayu, to the city of Lord Ram's birth, Ayodhya which is a city of Swadweep, the island of the individual. Ayodhya the impregnable city, was the land first blessed by Lord Ram's sacred feet. At the top of the main gates of the port, a moon had been designed into the walls. Below it was the Chandravanshi motto. 'shringar, Saundarya, Swatantra, passion, Beauty, freedom.

There were several encroachments all over the city. Some illegal immigrants occupied some open ground and pitched their tents and made giant slums. There was constant tension between the rich-home owning class and the poor landless who lived in slums. The city is considered to be in a state of terminal decline because of encroachments, bad roads, poor

construction, etc. None of the Ayodhyan houses were similar to the houses of Meluhan cities. Some structures were so grand that the Meluhans were amazed by the engineering talent of them. Civic-minded rich Swadweepans had created grand public gardens, temples, theaters, and libraries naming them after their family members.

Shiva was in a confusion to judge whether Chandravanshis were quite evil or not. Dilipa with moist eyes bent low towards Shiva and cried that he is not evil and his people are not evil.

Lord Ram is revered as a God in Ayodhya. Lord Ram left Chandravanshis unharmed because he believed that they are good. Parvateshwar said that Lord Ram is Suryavanshi Kshatriya of the Ikshvaku Clan, son of Dashrath and Kausalya, husband of Sita and honoured and respected as seventh Vishnu. Anandamayi reminded us that the full name of Lord Rama is Rama Chandra and is more Chandravanshi. After eating something with the old man, Shiva cursed his own heart for the desecration he had committed. He extended his arms and touched the feet of the old man. The old man blessed him. Finally, shiva felt that Chandravanshis are not evil.

The Question of Questions

In the temple, Lord Ram's idol was placed at the center and surrounded by his wife 'Sita;(right) and brother Lakshman(left) and Hanuman (at their feet). Shiva saw a Pandit who looked like the pandits met at Brahma temple at Meru and the Mohan temple at Mohan Jo Daro. Shiva is apologetic about his action towards Chandravanshis and confessed that it was his stupidity that led to this war. He had no idea what he was doing. Responsibility was thrust upon him and he was not worthy of it. Hundreds of thousands have vanished as a result.

Pandit said that many wars have been fought amongst men and many more will have foraged in the future. That is the way of the world. But it is the only a Mahadev who can convert one of those wars into the battle between good and evil. It is only Mahadev who can recognize evil and then lead men against it before evil raises its ugly head and extinguishes all life.

Pandit, being a Vasudev explained that each Vishnu leaves behind a tribe that is entrusted with two missions. The first mission is to help the next Mahadev when he appears. The second mission is that one of the tribes left by Vishnu will become the next Vishnu whenever they are required to do so. Accordingly, the seventh Vishnu, Lord Ram, entrusted this task to his trusted lieutenant, Lord Vasudev. Chandravanshis are their followers. Lord Rudra left behind a tribe, Vayu Putra. The pandit placed his hand on Shiva's head to bless him, speaking gently, Vijayibhav, Jai guru Vishwamitra, Jai guru Vashishta. Shiva put his hands together in a Namaste and paid his respects to Lord Ram.

Shiva could see a tribe flapping behind the trees, a short distance from Sati. A robed figure wearing a holy mask emerged from behind the trees. It is him and identified as the Naga. The Naga was too close for confront. It was sati who moved first, shifting quickly, she pulled a knife from her side-hold and launched at the Naga. The knife missed him narrowly. The Naga

pulled the knife out of the tree, tied it tightly to his right wrist with a cloth band. Then he moved quickly.

Conclusion

Recently, Amish Tripathi reminds the ancient epics and created powerful emotions with his visualized presentation of each character and their moments. In this fiction, Lord Shiva with the name Shiva is the protagonist. The creativity of the author in this novel is extracting some Vedic concepts from the Shiva Purana and interpreted them in the form of science to reach common people. Amish Tripathi has made a good effort in explaining some ancient mythical symbols to common people in this novel. His excellent creations are manufacturing and applications of somras and introducing the concept of Vikrama people and how Shiva abolishes the vikrama rule in the society. The novel ends with the war between Suryavanshis and Chandravanshis in which the latter was defeated with the help extended by Shiva. Ultimately, Shiva also came to know that Chandravanshis are not at all evil but different people so his journey to eradicate evil continued. After winning the Chandravanshis, when it is confirmed that they are not evil, the indicator of evil points towards the Nagas, the physically deformed people who are shown first spreading terrorism. Shiva communicates exceptionally with various Vasudev Pandits who are far away from each other with the help of telepathy. In the novel, Shiva has first to find out what is evil or the nature of evil or where is evil if it is there before destroying it. Somras is used as an antioxidant to detoxify the damages caused by various chemical toxins. Amish Tripathi illustrated the mythology of somras with different illuminating colour. He retold Shivpuran with polished, innovative, dramatic, thrilling, astonishing, and impressive form. He made a fantastic attempt to colour fiction from Indian mythology and theology. Amish Tripathi touched the caste system and good and bad of Indian tradition. After all, one's reality is but perception, viewed through various prisms of context" (295-296, *The Immortals of Meluha*)

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