

The Knowledge of Indian Traditions and Culture in the Writings of Amish Tripathi

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Abstract – Myth is sacred or symbolic story from the past, and it may be ritualistic in nature. A myth can be described as the origins of people, or explains customs or traditions. It is true that retelling of mythology is a common practice in literature. It is believed that the use of retelling of myths in literature with special reference of Indian English literature has undergone remarkable changes. The knowledge of Indian traditions and culture is seen through an alternative perspective. The quest for Indian traditions and culture in the writings of Amish Tripathi turns into a quest for identity and the true nature of Indian traditions, education and culture. Treatment of women empowerment in the writings of Amish Tripathi is also remarkable. In ancient time the role of education especially women education is remarkable. Most of the Women were educated in ancient times. They know the knowledge of Vedas and Puranas and skilled in medicine and administration. In the novels of Amish Tripathi education plays an important role. Most of his characters are well educated. The tradition and culture of India is described as the phenomenon of Indian society. The setting of the Shiva Trilogy is 1900 B.C. where each nation of the world become a representative of definite ideological system through its social governmental principal.

Keywords – Myth, Culture, Tradition, Education, Women Empowerment

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INTRODUCTION

It is believed that myth is to be the fundamental force of cultures and civilizations. From time immemorial theorists and critics have attempted to study and analyse myths. It has been a compulsory fact while it is studied the social and religious history of any proper group.

The nineteenth century theorists tried to study myth as naturally and subjectively. The act of particular myth would help as a literal or symbolic explanation of that particular world: "myth was taken to be the 'primitive' counterpart of science." (Segal 3) on the other hand, twentieth century critics have examined "myth as almost anything but an outdated counterpart to science, either in subject matter or in function." (Segal 3)

Amish Tripathi (1974) is a recognized contemporary Indian English novelist best known for his Shiva Trilogy and Ram Chandra Series. His Shiva Trilogy is based on the mythical Lord Shiva and his Ram Chandra Series, based on Ram, king of Ayodhya. His novels in Shiva Trilogy like *The Immortals of Meluha* (2010) *The Secret of the Nagas* (2012) and *The Oath of the Vayuputras* (2013) show the tradition and culture of India. His Ram Chandra Series has novels like 'Scion of Ikshvaku' (2015) *Sita: Warrior of Mithila*

(2017), *Raavan: The Enemy of Aryavarta*, (2019). His novels are mixture of culture, tradition, classical mythology, fantasy fiction, gender equality, popular science, philosophy and geographical structure. *The Immortals of Meluha* is the debut novel of Shiva Trilogy. In this novel, Amish shows the influence of traditions and culture on the society. This novel follows the tradition and culture of ancient India. Here Amish introduced Indus Valley Civilization in the form of Meluha. Amish tried to divide India between two states, named Meluha and Swadeep. The capital of Meluha is Devagiri and the capital of Swadeep is Ayodhya.

It is known that mythology of particular nation is a collection of myths, especially belonging to particular religion or cultural tradition of particular group of people. It is a collection of stories which explain nature, history, tradition, customs, religion of particular group. Amish Tripathi's Shiva Trilogy and Ram Chandra Series are based on rich Indian Tradition and Culture. His novels claim to be an interpretation of "the rich mythological heritage of ancient India, blending of fiction with historical fact." Through his novels, Amish presents all religions and traditions as being a path to the same ultimate truth.

The Immortals of Meluha is about a perfect imaginary kingdom which follows the dictates of Lord

Ram, somewhere in Northern India, in 1900 B.C. This novel talks about Lord Shiva and how he became God. It is a mixture of Indian mythology and some interesting ideologies of the society. In the beginning Lord Shiva is depicted as an ordinary man whose actions transform him to Mahadev. The people of Meluha believe that a person with blue throat will come as their saviour who will be called Neelkanth.

The novel opens near Mansarovar Lake (At the foot of Mount Kailash, Tibet). Shiva is the chief of the Guna tribe. He was an ordinary Tibetan who is invited along with Guna tribe by Meluhans. He finds out that in the advanced societies like Meluha can still be proved powerful. Meluha is near perfect land made by Lord Ram one of the greatest kings that ever lived.

The structure of the royal citadel was almost exactly like the other platforms. There were no special concessions made for the aristocrats. The same block structures that dominated all of Meluha were to be found in the royal citadel as well (The Immortals of Meluha : 71).

Shiva was fully surprised to see the structure of Meluha. He didn't believe on his eyes when he saw the structure of Bathroom and the temple.

"The temple was built of wood and it stood on a raised foundation of baked bricks, its cupola plated with solid gold !It seemed that special architecture was reserved only for structures built for the Gods or ones that were for the common good. (The Immortals of Meluha, 71).

The Meluhans follow the rules and traditions which were made by Lord Ram. They also believed in Lord Brahma. When Shiva's throat turned blue due to Somras then Shiva asked the invention of Somras. Daksha explained,

There is no sorcery at all my Lord what makes this possible is the brilliance of our scientists who make a potion called the Somras, the drink of the gods. Taking the Somras at defined times not only postpones our death considerably, but it allows us to live our entire lives as if we are in the prime of our youth mentally and physically. (The Immortals of Meluha, 88).

He further says that Lord Brahma invented the Somras many thousands of year ago. Lord Brahma was a prolific inventor.

The traditions and culture of Meluha is different from the traditions and culture of Swadeepans. The Meluha society was divided into four Varna - Brahmins, kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. Brahmins hold the highest position in Varna, known for their spiritual qualities. They were expert in Vedas and Puranas. Kshatriyas were great warriors and their role in the society was to protect other people. So they predominantly hold the position of kings. Vaishyas

regard as commoners they worked for the survival of society such as business, trade and commerce. Sudras were regarded as untouchable and their work was to clear the dirt of the society. Sudras were dominated by the society. His novels manifest the idea of evil, people of Meluha waiting for Neelkanth to save their life from evils. He introduced Sati, Hindu Mythical goddess who was under the curse of Vikarma, he gave an account of Vikarma system. Nandi said to Shiva,

Vikarma people my Lord, 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 sufferings 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 order.

(The Immortals of Meluha, 100)

It was the custom of untouchability that disturbed Shiva. Shiva asked Nandi again. Then Nandi replied,

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. (The Immortals of Meluha, 100).

The another tradition of Meluha was the Naga people when Shiva went to the temple where he met Sati. Suddenly a hooded man attacked Sati but Shiva and Sati defeat him and the hooded man ran away but Shiva sees his bracelet. Shiva draw the sketch of the bracket. When Nandi saw the sketch of bracelet that was like Aum. But Shiva told him that it was not like Aum. It was made of three serpent in the form of Aum. Then Nandi astonished at Shiva and whispered, Naga..... Shiva said to him who are the Nagas then Nandi replied,

Naga are cursed people my Lord; they are born with hideous deformities because of the sins of their previous births. Deformities like extra hands or horribly mishappen faces. But they have tremendous strength and skills. (The Immortals of Meluha, 64)

It is clear that outcaste was framed by Lord Manu in 'Manusmriti', his scripture. After Manu, Lord Ram consider as great upholder of dharma. On his part, he developed a various dimension of caste that spring with two tradition, the Vikarma and the Nagas. Sati is Vikarma and Kali and Ganesh are Naga. Vikarma are the people who have done sin in their previous birth and in this birth they are suffering for the sin committed in the past. It is clear that a person is marked as a Vikarma, if he or she is in death bed, a woman gives a birth to a stillborn child or a man become blind in his half-life. Nagas are people born

with deformities who have long nose, big ear and extra body parts so these people are contemplated as an evils and depart from the place of living.

One must mention the social system of Kashi and of the Naga Dynasty. Kashi becomes a point of confluence of the kinds of beliefs, castes and creeds. The liberalism practiced by Kashi does not make it vulnerable; rather this liberal framework makes it a place of ultimate peace and stability in the society. References should also be made to ruling system of Panchavati, the capital of Naga where they live with "the Suryavanshi ideal of justice and equality to its logical extreme" (The Secret of the Nagas, 385) but a long with it each citizen of Panchavati is allowed "to decide what they want to do with their lives. But the state provides housing and basic necessities. And in that, there is complete equality". (The Secret of the Nagas, 385).

The positions of Gender equality in the writings of Amish Tripathi require attention. It is found a wide range of women empowerment portrayals in the novels. These novels have highly revered female characters like Sati, Kali, Ayurvati, Kankhala, Anandmayi, Sita, Kaikeyi, Roshni, etc. The chief protagonists Sati and Sita are portrayed in a perfect blend of femininity and self-control. These women characters are well educated and adept in their department. Ayurvati and Roshni are perfect in medicine. They are doctor. Sati and Sita are expert in Vedas and Puranas. Kankhala Uma and Samichi are expert in administration. Kankhala is the prime minister of Meluha in Shiva Trilogy whereas Sita is the prime minister of Mithila in Ram Chandra Series. They follow the tradition and culture of their society. Sati follows the instruction of the society which were applied for the Vikarma People.

CONCLUSION

In this way it can be said that the mythical writers have structured a parallel domain of logic and reason that offers a fresh and alternative outlook to the past. So the inter textual references make the reading as well as the interpretation even more pleasurable. The way of myths have been brought out of their traditional and cultural framework, reworked and remodeled and the fiction is created out of them. So the authors of modern age attempt to glorify the nation, takes the readers back to the remote past. Myths are turned into history; they are turned into the framework of human experience.

Amish Tripathi highlights the traditions and culture of India through his writing. He emphasizes on the gender equality of female. In his novels, he shows the reality of the society. His fictional narrative has combined his aptitude for traditions, religion, culture, philosophy, history and mythology. He recreates myth with a modern style and humanizes his characters to invent the story of the man whom legend turned into god.

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