



Treatment of Myth and Individual in *The Immortals of Meluha*

Satish Kumar

GGM School Bhawar Gohana, Sonipat

Rajkumar Saini

Research Scholar, Deptt of English, CDLU, Sirsa

Abstract

The present research paper is About ‘Treatment of the Myth and individual in Amish Tripathi’s *The Immortals of Meluha.*’ It deals with individual in the context of the myth. Myth refers to a folk tales which is told by our grandparents and is based on unknowing able facts that becomes parts of our society with the passage of time. Individual refers to each and every nucleus thing that is separated from the society. It is also an important part of the society. In the novel, *The Immortals of Meluha* Tripathi tries to unfold the truth of how an individual and myth are treated in the society and how these myths are origin in the society and become the fundamental of the society and their impact on the society including with honour killing, outcaste system and untouchability.

Keywords: Myth, Individual, Society, Honour Killing, Outcaste system, Untouchability.

Reviews

The Immortals of Meluha is a beautiful representation of classical myth in the modern context. Many research Scholars who are interested in Hindu Mythology, are made their attempts on *The Immortals of Meluha* with different context and critical tools with their innovative ideas. These things inculcate me a direction to write a research paper on this work through my critical insight. So, I have chosen the topic “Treatment of the myth and individual in *The Immortals of Meluha*” with the help of contemporary existing school of knowledge building.

Introduction

Tripathi tries to reveal the problems of the contemporary Indian society. He has good knowledge about the Hindu mythology that is revealed through his books. *The Immortals of Meluha* He has a great knowledge about *The Shivapurana* and the Vedas; he tries to exhibit rich Indian cultural heritage that is neglected by the Europeans. Tripathi tries to present a picture of the modern Indian society. He deals with the problems of the society and tries to solve them with the help of Lord Shiva, because he affirms that only God can remove the evils of the society. He blends the classical myth with the contemporary social system like the pop music, which has coherence between beat and body. The subject matter of his books make him an Indian literary pop star, who tries to bring change in our perception about the Hindu mythology, folklore, legends, culture and history, good and evil etc. Tripathi tries to cast an impact on the readers with the help of the narrative technique. It raises curiosity in the reader to know the story as to what will happen next? It binds the readers to the story. Sandipan Deb observes the philosophical depth of the Tripathi's books:

Through all Amish's books flows a current of liberal progressive ideology: about the gender, about caste, about discrimination of any kind. And what I believe separates him from the horde of the Indian writers who have jumped on to mythology band wagon after Shiva's success, is his historical research. (Why Amish is Special)

Amish Tripathi gives a logical explanation of 'how an individual is raised to the heights of God and Goddess'. He wants to get us acquainted with the fact that an individual is identified in the society by its karma. He tries to tell us that an individual by its birth has a structure of the flesh and blood. Its karma elevates its position to a God and Goddess. The karma means the actions of an individual that decide its faith. How an individual reacts in a particular situation decides its karma. Tripathi denies the acknowledged perceptions that Shiva was a born God, whose existence has been forever and will remain forever. In fact, he believes that Shiva is an ordinary individual, who rose from the status of a tribal man to the height of a God because of his karma. In *The Immortals of Meluha*, Shiva is a Tibetan immigrant. He comes in the Meluha for the future of his tribe, where his karma raises him from an individual to their mythical God, the Neelkanth. Tripathi says:

Over the centuries, no foreigner who came to our land- conqueror, merchant, scholar, ruler, traveller-believed that such a great man could possibly have existed in reality. They assumed that he must have been a mythical God, whose

existence was possible only in the realms of human imagination. Unfortunately, this belief became our received wisdom.

But what if we are wrong? What if lord Shiva was not a figment of a rich imagination, but a person of flesh and blood? Like you and me. A man who rose to become god like because of his karma. That is the premise of *The Shiva Trilogy*, which interprets the rich mythological heritage of ancient India, blending fiction with historical facts. (*TIOM* 'Preface')

Giving a logical explanation about individual who gets the position of God and myth, Tripathi tries to reveal the importance of myths, which are considered fundamentals of the society and become traditions and followed continually without being observations. These traditions help in the formation of structure and foundation of the society. These are parts of individual's history and cultivate a sense of belongingness in individual and society and give strength to its culture and become myths of the society and these myth are followed by each and every individuals of the society. In *The Immortals of Meluha*, Shiva and Bhadra are concerned about their tribe's future. Bhadra believes that it is tradition of their tribe that the chief is considered the supreme authority of the society, who has the power of taking decisions so that the tradition may be followed by the other members of the tribe. There any member of the society dare not oppose the decision. But Shiva decides that he will counsel his people before concluding anything. Bhadra smiles towards Shiva and answers:

No we are not. You are the chief now. The tribe lives and dies by your decisions. It cannot be corrupted by any other influence. We are not like the Prakritis, where the chief has to listen to whoever is the loudmouth in their council. Only the chief wisdom is supreme amongst the Gunas. That is our tradition. - (27)

Showing myths are become of traditions and social laws of the society, but now these social laws are the tools of oppression of an individual. The individual accepts the social bond for fulfillment of its desire, needs and interest. It follows its norms for benefits. These laws are made for an individual's safety and stability of social structure. But these laws have become a tool of oppression for the individual. In *The Immortals of Meluha*, Amish Tripathi tries to highlight the oppression of individual with the help of the concept of Vikarma law. Vikarma is an individual who did something wrong in the past: as an outcome of this, it lives a life of Vikarma. Sati, a daughter of king, is considered a Vikarma as she gave birth to a stillborn child. She has to live like an outcaste without any fault of her, but she is an exceptional warrior, a dancer, a loving wife and a loving daughter. Her characteristics make her an exceptional character of the novel. But she is neglected in the society. She is not allowed to worship like

other women of the society, even though she is the daughter of the king. She is oppressed by the society on the basis of certain social laws. Nandi replies to Shiva:

That sounds pretty ridiculous to me. A woman could have given birth to a still born child simply because she did not take proper care while she was pregnant. Or it could just be a disease. How can anyone say that she is being punished for the sins of her previous birth? - (93)

Raising voice against the unorthodox laws, Tripathi tries to raise his voice against the outcaste system in the society with the help of society. The outcaste system is a system of social boycott of an individual for the sins of its previous birth. It is a boycott of an individual from the public and religious celebrations. In *The Immortals of Meluha*, Sati also faces social boycott in the society. She is not allowed to perform any puja, religious and public ceremonies. If accidentally, she touches any men and women, she pollutes them. . Drapaku wants to tell Shiva that “It’s not obstinacy. You tell me, honestly, how can it harm me if I happened to touch a wronged man, who I might add, still loves his country despite the way he has been ostracized and ill- treated?” (200).

Having raise voice against the outcaste system, Tripathi tries to highlight the issue of untouchability with help of mythical characters. He an individual is neglect in the society by its caste because it belongs to an inferior caste. It remains untouched and outcaste. Shiva and his companions organize a public ceremony in which Shiva announces himself as their God. At that movement, the public try to meet their Lord Neelkanth. At that time, a blind man, Drapaku touches Shiva’s feet and Shiva’s companion suggests him that he needs to go for Shudhikaran. This incident highlights the effect of untouchability in the society. Another incident happens, when Shiva goes to the Royal garden, where Sati along with her mates has come to dance practice. While dancing Shiva accidentally touches Sati. She is immediately asked to go for a shudhikaran as she has polluted him. Shiva turns towards:

Sati and touched her elbow to move it to correct angle. Sati immediately recoiled in horror as there was a gasp from the Guruji as well as Krittika. Shiva instantly realized that something terrible had happened. ‘I am sorry,’ said Shiva, with a look of sincere regret. ‘I was just trying to be showed you where your elbow should be.’ Sati continued to stare at Shiva, stunned into immobility. The Guruji was the first to recover his wits and realize that Shiva must undergo the purification ceremony. ‘Go to your Pandit, Shiva. Tell him, you need a Shudhikaran.’ - (102-103)

Tripathi tries to highlight the role of myth in the contemporary Indian social system through religious the life story of Lord Shiva. The myth is a symbolic significance in the social system. It describes certain aspects of nature as well as the origin of laws and customs. It plays an enormous role in society. In the Hindu mythology, it is believed that the social system is set up by the lord. It depends upon fundamental laws. These fundamental laws are set up by God. So, it is considered that the God has power to change such laws. In *The Immortals of Meluha*, they follow the lifestyle, custom and religious ceremony, the basic principles, moral values which were set up by lord Rama's principles. They believe that they are the true followers of the lord Ram and follow the principle of the Lord Rama, when the Nagas attack on Meluhan; they fight with them according to the rules. Their whole system is based on the laws of and they follow it very strictly. In the novel, Shiva is represented as Lord Neelkanth. People have a blind faith in their God Neelkanth. It is believed that only God can save them from the evils and the misfortunes they face the result of the God's curse. Daksha replies to Shiva:

You are the Neelkanth, continued Shiva. 'In fact you are more than that. I genuinely believe that you are a Mahadev, even though I know you don't like to be called one. You are above the law. You can change the law if you wish. You can override it if you want.' If you decide to take my daughter's hand, my lord, no power on earth can stop; contended Daksha. The question is: what do you want? -(277-278)

To conclude, I have tried an attempt to study the significance of myth in the society and how these myths are treated in the society and relation with an individual. Tripathi has offered a logical explanation of truth behind every myth explaining how life of an individual, is shaped in society and how an individual, who suffer injustice, brings revolution in the society. However, Tripathi discusses problems faced by people in ancient times but the solution he offers to these problems seems relevant even in the contemporary society. It also reflects our glorious past and provides us a window to look through it to find ourselves little insignificant beings in front of such a stupendous cultural cosmos. It is a story in which he captures the spirit of those ages that represents our past. His characters are classical and are the result of his inclination towards mythical characters. He portrays his characters as the true revellers of the human life and simple human beings of flesh and blood. They behave like normal human beings and their destiny affects them.

Bibliography

- Mishra, Lata. "Man-Woman Dynamics in": *The Immortals of Meluha and The Secret of Nagas. Labyrinth: An International Refereed Journal of Postmodern Studies*. 04.1(1 Jan, 2013): 178-187. Print.
- Mukherjee, Dipanjoy. "Amish Tripathi's": *The Immortals of Meluha (Shiva Trilogy I): A Critical Appreciation. Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*. 04.1(01 January, 2016): 186-192. Print.
- Niviargi, M. M. "A Brief Survey of Myth and the Contemporary Indian English Popular Novel."
European Academic Research. 02.2(May 2014): 2554- 2565. Print.
- Narayana, R. K. *The Man Eater of Malagudi*. London: Penguin Books, 01 May. 1993. Print.
- Tripathi, Amish. *The Immortals of Meluha*. Chennai: Westland Ltd. 2010. Print.