



VIDHYAYANA

ISSN 2454-8596

www.vidhyayanaejournal.org

An International Multidisciplinary Research e-Journal

Human Happiness and Culture Portrayal in Amish Tripathi's

Shiva Trilogy: A Study

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An International Multidisciplinary Research e-Journal

ISSN 2454-8596

www.vidhyayanaejournal.org

Abstract:

21st century is the witness of the significant swing in all the spheres of life. The whole scenario is going towards the generational change. We have, since so long left the colonial attire behind and we now want to read and write about our own roots, our shadows and our culture. There is different culture time to time. The literature can never be past. Since past few years, the young generation is making experiment in abundance. These writers have attracted the attention of the busy readers of India.

The young Indian generation has forgotten the rich ancient culture and they are highly attracted by the western culture. They are craving for the western culture. In this situation, Amish's Shiva Trilogy is a milestone in history of Indian Publishing History. He has contributed a lot in the new Indian and has educated the new generation about the rich culture of India.

In this paper we will explore the Amish's point of view on the culture of India, and in Indian English Writing. He revitalized the Indian culture in History. Amish has recast the Indian culture by attributing scientific explanations to the controversial ethics. He has revived the tradition of Heroic age of India. He has revolutionized the Indian writing in English.

Keywords: Myth, history, culture, karma, epic, the Neelkantha

21st century is the witness of the significant swing in all the spheres of life. The whole scenario is going towards the generational change. We have, since so long left the colonial attire behind and we now want to read and write about our own roots, our shadows and our culture. There is different culture time to time. The literature can never be past. Since past few years, the young generation is making experiment in abundance. These writers have attracted the attention of the busy readers of India.

The languages that we use as a medium of communication, the ideas, the ethnicity, the religion, nationality and the displacement as well as re-location and hybridization can be included into a single word 'Culture'. The 'culture' is that complex whole that includes the knowledge, art, beliefs, habits acquired by people, moral laws and customs. It is the combination of all traits acquired by man from his peer group by both ways, conscious learning and by unconscious learning. An Indian scholar, S. Abid Husain says:

Culture is a sense of ultimate values possessed by a particular society expressed in its collective institutions, by its individual members in their dispositions, feelings, attitudes and



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ISSN 2454-8596

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manners as well as in significant forms which they give to material objects (p-3)

Indian culture is based on the birth, rebirth and salvation, it is based on the truth and reality, idea of spiritual truth and divinity. It is also based on the typical social system like cast system. Good and evil has always been most potent for Indian society and its culture. It is the combination of Dharma and Karma. The 'Swadharma' should be attended to achieve a greater God in life, distinguishes the Indian culture from western culture.

India has the rich identity of Vasudheiv Kutumbakam and Atithi Devobhav. The mythic memories are deeply rooted in the Indians. More than 80 percent of Indian population is Hindu, as well as there are followers of other path too. There are the followers of Christians, Jains, Sikhs, Parsees and others. The Indian tradition has played the role in giving way to secularism in the country. Who should be given primary status in India is also a question as there are many paths and its followers in India. The pure hindu followers says that they are the true representatives of India. Amartya Sen talks about two facts here:

- (1) The statistical fact that the Hindus from an overwhelming majority of Indians (no other community comes anywhere close to numerically), and
- (2) The historical and cultural fact that the Hindu traditions goes back more than three thousand years in Indian history (at least to the Vedas) and that nearly every part of the Indian culture bears the historical imprint of Hindu thoughts and practices. (Amartya Sen, 53)

Samuel Huntington also strongly believes that the India is a Hindu Civilization. It is also the fact that India has the most Muslims in the country than any other country in the world, especially an Indonesia and Pakistan. The ancientness of Hindu culture cannot be denied as Indian culture is prosperous and having unique cultural identity.

An Indian mind has been engrossed in seeking an analysis of the world through the sence of perception. Indians have the experience values. Indians believe in the world of spirit. There is the term like 'Darshana', vision, seeing. The soul should be scanned by being. Such soul become more important than itself. Indians have one more source of reality, source of knowledge, and that is, experience. Pavan K. VArma says, "...the indigenous culture could not only withstand the onslaught but also absorb elements from the culture of the conquerors (p-126)" it is that landmark in Indian society. Religion is always the core of the issue of identity. That is why there is always at least one separate room or space for there spiritual invocation in house by



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ISSN 2454-8596

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Indians.

In western culture, the culture and the religion is adopted from the sacred bible. Countries like India, possesses the rich culture and heritage. The culture and history is rich with the books like, the grand Vedas, Shiva Purana, the Ramayana, the Bhagavad Gita and the Mahabharata. These boos are the source of inspiration. It is the religious source for a common Hindu and it is also the source for the writers who contributes in Indian literature in English. They never bother about the criticism and accusations. They have always tried to enrich the Indian Literature.

While writing on or about the History and culture, the writers find out the meaning of their present situation in the past. They try to relate it and they try to find answer. They rewrite the mythological stories and they give new touch to it. When the Marxist movement was introduced to the academic area, the many writers have revisited the Marxist literature to get the new meaning from it. The same way the feminist literature was also given new touch while study. Those who represent the traditional values are the cultural heroes of the nation. Via this medium the philosophical ideas like birth of human being, rebirth, death, karma and destiny are represented in those mythological stories. Such rewriting about these characters and representation of these characters are called 'archetypes'.

The works of Raja Rao represents the long tradition of the cultural delineation of Indian English Fiction. Moreover the young writers like, Amish Tripathi, Ashok Banker, Kirshna Udayashankar and Ashwin Sanghi. These young novelists gave the modern touch to the mythology of Indian culture. Among all these young writers, the Tripathi leads all these young novelists as Tripathi has given major contribution in developing this style and giving the modern touch. He has established the world of cultural description and he has built the world of culture on the bases of the Science and Philosophical arguments. He has related the mythological characters to the modern time. He has imagined those mythological characters in human form with all their qualities. Tripathi acknowledges this thing in his interview in Swarajya Magazine:

It has always existed in our culture. There are many concepts of God in the ancient Indian way. There is a nirgun niraakaar concept, called Brahman in ancient times. There is a sagun, aakar concept, where God takes a form to come closer to us. There is the avatar concept, where God is born on Earth, completes His/Her karma and goes back. And there is the concept where a human becomes a God. I find this last concept inspiring since it means all of us have God within us, and it's up to us to discover the God within. (Antara Das – July 11, 2015, 11:30 am)



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Amish Tripathi re writes and talks about the sacred Hindu text Shiva Purana into fictional creation. Amish Tripathi has written three books, the first book, The Immortals of Meluha that introduces the readers to the culture of ancient india. The second book The Secret of Nagas talks about good and evil that is the core of an Indian cuture and the third and the concluding book The Oath of Vayuputras talks about the people who follows the Laws of nature. It says that those who ignores the laws of nature, violates it and those who follows the laws of nature that leads the whole nation one step ahead towards the enlightenment. The laws of nature and Dharma should be followed to live progressive and harmonious life. The three books give the glimpse of the myth of Indian culture in modern context. It talks about the existence of Lord Shiva, who is Indian mythological God. It is also based on Pseudo historical events.

Amish describes Lord Shiva. He describes the Shiva in two parts. In first part he describes Shiva as a normal human being who is an ordinary human just like other people on earth who enjoys the chillum of marijuana. At the same time Amish describes Shiva in the form of Lord who is a warrior who is with trishul and snake. As according to Hindu mythology, sati stands for sacred things on earth like marriage and motherhood whereas Kali represents destruction. She also represents herself as a Devi who protects her children. Weather it is in the disguise of Kali or sati, Amish represents an Indian lady as an embodiment of sacrifice, endurance and compassion.

The location of the first novel is Meluha and Ayodhya that is the capital of Swadweep. In the second novel the whole story revolves around Kashi, Magadh, Brangaridai and Dandak forests. Meluha is the kingdom of Suryavanshi is Meluha and the Kingdome of Chandravanshis is Swadweep. It is the duty of a true Survanshi to execute his capabilities to the utmost level for the sake of the ethics of Meluha. The life of an Indian person is not just the physical phenomenon. An Indian man lives with some religious duties too. An Indian man constantly engages himself in knowing himself. He always delivers the sublime and his best to this world. It is considered as the basic concept of human life in Indian culture. As Dr. Radhakrishnan says:

The goal of life is communion with the Supreme. It is a life of realization, a gnosis, an inner intuitive vision of God, when man achieves absolute freedom and escapes from the blind servitude to ordinary experiences. It is a subtle interwovenness with the realities of the spiritual world. (Religion and culture, 22)

The Meluhan Suryavanshid live by 'Satya, Dharma, Mann'; Truth, Duty, Honour' (62) which are the



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nucleus values of Indian cultural identity. They say about Rama's teaching:

If you have to choose between my people and Dharma, choose Dharma! If you have to choose between my family and Dharma, choose Dharma! Even if you choose between me and Dharma, always choose Dharma! (The Oath of Vayuputras, 282)

The cultural life of Meluha was infused by the rivers, forests, rocks and temperatures. Nagas and Brangas are the people who share the Meluhan culture and thus they carry the Meluhan culture. The Geographic and climatic advantages of this life became the reason of difference in the Chandravanshies. Only royalty is benefited by somras as they receive the limited water of river Sarasati. Amish presents in his book that they have special respect for the rivers, "the Saraswati was the holiest among them all. It was their spiritual Mother." (The Oath of the Vayuputras, 292). The ayodhyans live the overpopulated life whereas the Vayuputras lived the life where there is no people, i.e. in an isolated area. Thus the geographical factor affect the psychology of the people greatly. In fact they play a role in shaping their lives as well as the mindset of the whole society.

There is the great verity in the style the way people lives I those areas and that verity prepares the people to accept the differences. The vast spaces gives room to each individual to grow in their own way. The economic life of the people is affected by the geographic unity of the people. The population is slowly grow as par the size and the type of the land in the country. India is the country that is continuously growing and that is constantly changing since four or five thousand years. The agriculture economy has created the common outlook in the whole country. It is believed in the culture of India that the action of the rural decides the destiny of the land. Parvateshwa says, "A leader's karma impacts his entire land. He is supposed to be his people's icon. That is a universal truth." (The Oath of the Vayuputras, 59)

Along with the Shiva's journey in the Trilogy, Amish gives the glimpse of 1900 BC. Shivas's journey starts from Mt. Kailash in Tibet. It travels to Srinagar and Hariyupa to Swadweep kingdom to ayodhya and Kashi and then he reaches to Magadh. Here through all these places, Amish presents the universal brotherhood. He presents the unique quality of India and its culture. As he says, "We accept every community from India in Kashi. All of them live peacefully, making this great city their home." (The Secret of Nagas, 72)". He describes that the Indian culture has engrossed in achieving the spiritual heights. It has always promoted the moral values. The Indian culture pervades the numerous casts, tribes and religious groups. The structure of Indian culture promotes moral value. And the attitude og generosity. The Indian



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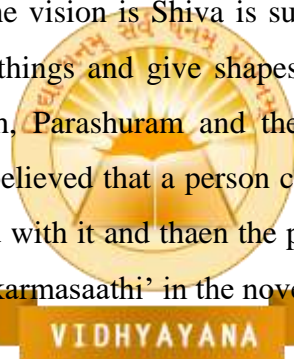
ISSN 2454-8596

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culture also promotes the idea of co-operation. It clutches the human beings, nature and God into one whole. It creates the idea of satyam-shivam-sundaram.

Shiva takes the initiative to bring the social reformation in Meluha. He leads the life that if lived with Dharma. He does not give examples only, he also lives the life according to it for example he accepts Sati and marries even if she is widow. He accepts Ganesh as his son. He pushes the nation towards the higher state of consciousness. Along with his journey he becomes the enlighten human being, a Neelkanth. All the people, wherever he goes, follow him. They also walks on the path of Shiva. They sacrifices their own deeds for the upliftment of Universal Dharma. Shiva is something more than a social human being. Because of his initiative the people of Swadweep, Naga, Branga and Meluha becomes his followers. They sacrificed their Swadharma for the greater good. Shiva always believe in universal dharma. Once he completes his duties, he returns to the place from where he was origin. Duting the interaction with the Vasudevas, Shiva gains the knowledge of self-consciousness. There is the difference between Shiva and Vasudeva. Vasudevas are just informative but Shiva is investigative. The vision is Shiva is such that he sees the things external to him. Shiva is investigative. He works on the things and give shapes to it. he take chance to inwardise things during the interaction with Kali, Ganesh, Parashuram and the people of Meluha and Swadeepans. As according to the Indian philosophy, it is believed that a person carries past impressions at the time of birth, then hariditary constitutions are combined with it and thaeen the psyche of an individual is developed. Shiva is addressed as 'fellow traveler in karma, karmasaathi' in the novel by Vasudevas.



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Shiva evolves himself continuously. Shiva represents the universal human being and he creates higher state of consciousness. The karma and reincarnation has special place in the culture of India. By doing good deeds one gets the comfortable life in the next birth on earth. By doing bad deeds one takes birth in a lower order and has to suffer a lot. It works on the fruits of Karma. Only man is given the blessings that he can differentiate between good and bad. With this understanding, he can go for the good deeds and he can improve himself. If a man continuously perform good deeds, it leads him to a salvation. It is not only the base of Upanishads but it is also the base of Jainism and Buddhism. The reincarnation is based on the action done in previous birth.

The soul of the Indian culture is spirituality. The self-realization on the bases of Dharma is given importance in Indian culture. The Meluhan prime minister says, "...dharma is that which is well judge by your mind; think deeply about Dharma and your mind will tell you what is right... dharma protect those who protect it." (The Oath of Vayuputras, 435-436). Indian culture focuses on Dharma and on moral duty. The



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ISSN 2454-8596

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supreme thing in life is to perform one's own duty. India has main more than 200 casts and it has thousands of sub-casts. The casts decide the social status of a person. The Meluhan society is devided into four categories, Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. Brahmans represent the catagory of teachers, lawyers, priests and other intellectual professions. The Kshatriyas are warriors, the Vaishyas are craftsmen, businessman and traders whereas the Shudras are farmers and workers. It was the management of the society that the person of one cast cannot work in other cast. Nandi gives the clear picture of this social structure. He says,

Well, if the lines are drawn to represent the head of the Parmatma, it would mean the wearer is a Brahmin. The symbol for a Vaishya would be the lines forming a symbol of the thighs of the Parmatma. And the feet of the Parmatma on the amulet would make the wearer s Shudra. (The Immortals of Meluha, 38)

Every Meluhan is given the symbols. In this way they respect their casts. Nagas possess many talents but they are not allowed to stay in society with other people. Nandi explains, "They are born with hideous deformities because of the sins of their previous births. Deformities like extra hands or misshapen faces... They are not allowed to live in the Sapt Sindhu" (Meluha, 59)

Being the normal human being the world gets destabilized for him but being the nilkanth, the world gets restored around him. He uses Pashupatishastra to get stability. After the victory of Shiva, their land is habitable now. Hindu mythology has great story behind *avataran* of Ganga on the Earth.

Conclusion:

Amish talks about the philosophy of the pure consciousness. He talks about Shiva in Shiva Trilogy in different relations with each other. The whole existence of Shiva is depended upon Brahma. Upanishad says that Brahma is endless. The Indian philosophy says that Brahma is the only reality. Amish says that in earlier times the man was in his supreme state but now he is falling down. It is relevant in today's time. He believes that the cultural values are must for the existence of life. There are so many realities, says Amish, "Whatever appears as the unshakable truth, its exact opposite may also be true in another context. One's reality is but perception, viewed through various prisms of context." (Meluha, 295-96). Shiva studies and understands the culture of Meluha and it helps him in making communication with Suryavanshies. Understanding the culture of others gives a clue that how the culture is important in the life of others too. It helps to understand that one's own culture plays an important role in shaping the perception of self and



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society. The Views of Amish Tripathi about culture differs from that of the rules of western culture.

In a nutshell, the Trilogy is an attempt to understand culture, tradition, the history and the mythological belief of the country. He brings the Laws of nature in the center of thinking and then he makes us understand what is culture. While discussing all these things, Tripathi recognizes the rich indian culture through his imaginative faculty.

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