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HUMANIZING THE DIVINE: A SELECT STUDY OF AMISH TRIPATHI'S
THE IMMORTALS OF MELUHA

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ABSTRACT

This research paper makes an attempt to discover how Shiva as a man distinguishes from Lord Shiva and the extent to which the author succeeds in presenting *Shiva Trilogy* as a spiritual guide to modern generation. Amish chooses the most multi-faceted god from Hindu Mythology to weave his tale about. He presents Shiva as a moral being asking, "What if Lord Shiva was not a figment of rich imagination but a person of flesh and blood?". Amish amends *Shiva Purana* by redefining Lord Shiva as a man of flesh and blood who later transforms to godly stature because of his karma. Human centred approach revolves throughout the novel which empower the author to present *Shiva Trilogy* as a spiritual guide to upcoming generation as it equip them to discover Mahadev with in them to absorb evil and perspire goodness.

Key Words: Humanizing, Reconstruction, Mythology

INTRODUCTION

The word 'Myth' generated from Greek word 'Mythos', means story or word. Myths are morally suggestive tales usually set in distant past which are believed as true and comprises of unearthly, supernatural creatures or legendary characters. They are moral stories which emphasise a better world view or admirable action within society. Puranas are categorised under Hindu Mythology. They envelope stories which stand apart from Epics. It includes heroic and adventurous stories of gods, goddesses and other mythical characters. As Caroline Alexander states in *New York Times*, "Survival of these myths, some of them immemorially ancient, is precisely due to the fact that they have been readdressed, readjusted and reinterpreted through ages". Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight* series, which revisit

age old myths of Vampires and Werewolves can be cited as an instance for revisiting mythology. Amish Tripathi re-narrates *Shiva Purana* in his *Shiva Trilogy* which interpolates *The Immortals of Meluha*, *The Secret of the Nagas* and *The Oath of Vayuputras*. Through this series the author wants to accentuate the fact that, god exists within every living being. Indian theory on gods describe different forms of god: "Nirgan, Aakar, Avatar and last form in which a man or woman becomes god or discover the god within"(Nair 22). Here Amish adopts the fourth category to demonstrate Lord Shiva as a typical common folk who later becomes godlike because of his karma. He redefines Hindu myths to reinforce the fact that gods are only human and for their greater deeds they are worshipped. Thus recreation of *Shiva Purana* enables him to

promote spiritual lessons on Dharma and Karma to younger generation by regenerating their interest in Shiva who represents modern man.

Brahma, the creator; Vishnu, the preserver and Shiva, the destroyer forms the trinity of gods. God Shiva is stated as the one who is responsible for the destruction of the Universe for a new beginning or process of creation. The worldly creations foster due to the equanimity between two opposing forces of good and evil. When the balance collapses, through destruction Lord Shiva instigates another birth cycle to maintain presence of life. Despite being called Lord of destruction, Lord Shiva is often addressed as Maheswara who imbibes the three cosmic forms Srishi, Sthiti and Laya. He is the one who removes excess of desires, ignorance, evil thoughts and actions, attachments, passions and emotions. *Rig Veda* highlights the earlier form of Shiva, who is charged as destructive storm god. *Yajur Veda* distinct Shiva as 'auspicious' despite being 'terrible'. The sages portray Shiva as an absolute Brahman in *Shvestashwara Upanishad*. Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu resonate same cosmic energy hence *Harivama* embellishes the spiritual fact that there is no distinction between Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu. Lord Shiva has different forms according to Hindu Mythology. He is the one who removes "what is inauspicious" and makes for "what is auspicious". Shiva encapsulates all the divine qualities but at the same time He mirrors both good and bad traits of humans. Lord Shiva is stated as the god of inconsistency in the spiritual text *Shiva the Greatest God*, as he is "a withdrawn ascetic as well as a Universal progenitor, both male and female principle in one, creator and destroyer, teacher of various art forms, precursor of dance form, idolizer of women and frightener of men, a humanitarian and at the same time furious avenger"(Singh 24).

Lord Shiva almost possesses sixty four manifestations. He is Maheshwara, the ruler of the Universe. He is Shankara, the destructor of darkness and ignorance. He is Shambu, who spreads eternal happiness. He is Jatadhari, the one with matted hair. He is Gangadhara as he holds Ganga in his locks to demolish the effect of destruction when it

descends from heaven to earth. Lord Shiva is Nataraja, the flames emerging from his dance form places him as the principle cause of whole creation. Moreover He is addressed as Dakshinamoorthy, the teacher of yoga and wisdom. In totality, Lord Shiva is confidant of man, divulging both positive and negative energy within us and symbolises the primal force behind the principles of creation.

Robert Gaudin describes humanism as a "term freely applied to a variety of beliefs, methods and philosophies that place central emphasis on human realm"(Chatterjee 2). It is a rationalistic approach that attributes much importance to human rather than sacramental or mystical affairs. Amish excerpts a humanistic point of view to deal with the story of Shiva. *Shiva Trilogy* episodes the transformation of a man from an ordinary Tibetan immigrant to Neelkant, the saviour of Meluhan Empire. His journey takes us through the darker shades of evil, his internal conflict to differentiate good and evil and his calling and destiny. It claims to be an interpretation of "the rich mythological heritage of ancient India, blending fiction with historical fact"(Chatterjee 5). *The Immortals of Meluha* is devoid of religious elements as it caricatures Shiva as a man of flesh and blood, a Tibetan tribal leader who stands apart from the magnificent deity of popular consciousness. It highlights humanistic aspect through integration of both good and bad traits of man in this contemporary modern world. The protagonist is depicted as an ordinary human being who strives hard to lead a common life enjoying the utmost freedom. Lord Shiva is reconstructed to a human image without any godly physical stature. The author justifies his humanistic approach by asking, "What if Shiva was not a figment of rich imagination but a man of flesh and blood? Like you and me"(Tripathi 1).

Purana states Lord Shiva as the one who removes ignorance and desires, attachments, passion, emotion and all other deadly human qualities but Amish's Shiva labours hard to track down real evil. He remains insensible about the socio-religious beliefs and practices of Meluhan

society throughout the series. His ignorant mind forces him to seek help of Vasudev Pandits and Gopal to dissolve the mythical mysteries hidden in Vedic texts. He hesitates to admit the worldly responsibilities surmounting him as he places himself as an ordinary being without divine or magical entities. Throughout the novel Amish succeeds in maintaining human centred approach to do justice to his protagonist. Shiva's thoughts, manners and lifestyle reflect the mentality of a typical modern man who is reluctant to follow old norms, customs and mythical mysteries. Thus through Shiva, Amish illustrates different shades of human life to embellish the underlying godly light within human mind.

DISCUSSION

The word 'Shiva' literally means 'that which is not'. Science defines the existence of the Universe as, "everything come out of nothing and will go back into nothing"(Shukla 2). In their own language Scientists quote Lord Shiva as the one who holds everything together. At the sky one sees many stars but still the biggest presence is the vast emptiness. This emptiness – the very basis of creation is referred to as Lord Shiva.

Amish capsules his first series of *Shiva Trilogy* as "the story of a man, whom legend turned into a god". He humanises Lord Shiva to substantiate his idea about evil, its consequences and ways to eliminate it. He questions the notion of god, within and outside the skeleton of accepted religious customs and set of beliefs. According to Amish, "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"(344). The author tries to prove this statement through the journey of his protagonist Shiva. Shiva begins his life journey like an ordinary child who largely enjoyed his carefree childhood, " preferred art of throwing pebbles that bounced off the surface of lake"(1). Here Amish attributes a new face to Lord Shiva as Purana portrays him as a god who can't be confined within different stages of manly life unlike Lord Ram and Lord Krishna, thus Lord Shiva forms the eternal cosmic energy which has no

beginning or end. The novel presents Shiva as an "uncouth immigrant" who shifts to Meluha in search of a better peaceful life. Amish thus provides his protagonist with the image of an escapist who instead of fighting back Pakratiss, strives way to inhabit a better pasture for his tribe at Meluha. The sight of Nandi, the captain of Meluha generates doubts in Shiva, "Is this the man who will lead me to my destiny. Do I really have destiny my uncle speak of"(4). Even though Purana states Lord Shiva as the one who decides the fate and destiny of mankind, Amish recreates Shiva as a man who is oblivious of his own destiny or purpose of life. Thus Amish makes an attempt to substantiate the question of existence through the ways and thoughts of Shiva.

A true faithful image of a tribal leader is provided to the protagonist Shiva. His uncle once said, "Your destiny is much larger than these massive mountains but to make it come true you will have to cross these same massive mountains"(4). Despite of these childhood lessons Shiva sees himself impotent as he often undergoes self- introspection, "Do I really deserve a good destiny?"(5). At Meluha Shiva's potential is glorified as an astounding warrior which later adds up to the features of Neelkant, the living legend. Shiva's questions on destiny, chances of a better life negotiate with Nandi's hope when he first meets Shiva, "Shiva has the heart, he has the potential, let it be him"(9) says Nandi. At Meluha the author tries to incorporate Shiva as a saviour through the magical effect of somras on his body. Here Amish manipulates Puranic myths which narrate the myths behind Samudra Mandan, its effect and how Lord Shiva acquired the name Neelkant. Thus Amish denounces godhood and divinity by presenting Shiva as an ordinary being.

Magical effect of somras on Shiva changes his destiny. Shiva gets confused and stunned by the reaction of Nandi and Ayurvati on seeing his blue throat. Shiva neglects the sudden devotion and respects of Meluhans which arouse due to his blue throat. "What the hell is going here?"(28) he asks agitatedly. Whereas Purana states Lord

Shiva as the lover of his worshippers. At Meluha, Shiva hesitates to meet the Emperor, "I'm not going till somebody tells me what is going on. What the hell is this damned legend of Neelkant?"(28). Shiva fails to understand the spiritual, socio-economic aspects of Meluhan life which announce train of responsibilities upon him. Thus he seeks help of his friend Bhadra to resolve mysteries. Bhadra comprehends the ill happenings in Meluha which force people to seek help of a foreigner. As an ordinary man, Shiva couldn't comprehend the real problem or the presence of evil in peaceful orderly life of Meluhans. Shiva admits, "But I can't seem to see any trouble out there? Everything seems perfect?"(27). Thus Amish succeeds in presenting Shiva as a wanted man without any spiritual sense to foresee the upcoming events or identify original evil. On the other hand in Purana, Lord Mahadev is the one who could predict the future of the Universe. Shiva throughout this series fails to envision his life goal. His generating guilty conscious compels him to confess that, "I can't bear the guilt of running away once again. Why should this bloody blue throat change anything?"(29) Blue throat has much significance throughout the series as it draws much importance to Shiva at Meluha whereas Purana signals the importance of Lord Shiva from the beginning of the Universe as he is the one who recapitulates new birth-death cycle. Blue throat of Lord Shiva stands as one among the symbols of Lord's sacrifice to protect the Universe rather than being the only prime reason which arises him to much spiritual significance.

The protagonist of this novel sees himself as inferior to others. Shiva doubts, "What can I do of you smart people can't?"(32). Unaware of the spiritual tribulations followed in Meluha, Shiva questions Lord Ram's identity and his importance in Meluha. Thus the author pays justice in portraying Shiva as a man who is astounded by the laws and manners of an unknown land where he is destined to live. The chapter 'She Enters His Life' discloses Shiva's mental trauma, "What the hell do these Meluhans need me for anyway? And why in the

name of holy lake is my bloody throat still feeling so cold?"(45). Through these interrogative thoughts Shiva projects the inner conflict which partakes within him. Lord Shiva, who frames the destiny and fate of man is subverted as a living being surmounted by limits of human predicaments. Shiva exposes the characteristics of an atheist at the beginning of the novel as he is against idol worship. At temple, the brilliance of architecture strikes his attention rather than the divine magnificence of the idol. According to Shiva, "Real god exists in all around us. All we need is to listen"(46). Shiva thus reflects the mind of a modern man who possess renewed spiritual ideologies that chronicles much difference from the age old norms and beliefs. Eyes of Shiva capture fascinating aspects and embodiments of modern world as that of a common man. Even though Parvateshwar quotes Shiva as some uncouth immigrant with little education and skills who can't save Meluhan Empire, Shiva with much patience tries to sustain in that strange land and strives hard to imbibe the significance of Neelkant through the faith the Emperor of Meluha have for him. Daksha strongly believes that Shiva will transform Meluha to a land of "truth, duty and honour".

Purana designates Lord Shiva as Nataraja, the god of dance form. Amish caricatures Shiva as an admirer of dance and its diverse forms. Shiva gives equal weightage to dance as well as to warfare and excels in both. He danced only for himself. Shiva uses Nataraj pose, "to align his energy to the Universal energy so that dance emerges on its own"(78). At Meluha, Guruji addresses Shiva as Nataraja after experiencing his performance. But Shiva claims, "I'm just a medium of the boundless Nataraj energy. Anyone can be the medium"(79). Thus Amish entails a proper distinction between Shiva, the god and Shiva, the man. As the journey progresses the author depicts Shiva as a typical romantic hero who also possess a good sense of humour. Shiva craves for the love of his beloved Sati. He makes his request, "Holy lake, help me get her. I will not ask for anything from you ever again"(93). The author clearly depicts the protagonist's intense love

through the flow of his flair thoughts. The difficulties he has to face on his path towards love is substantiated by his mind as, "When it's so valuable, it can't be easy, can it?". Here the thoughts of a human mind which is prepared to encounter any obstacles on the path to its beloved is projected. Intense love within Shiva generates revolutionary thoughts which abstain resemblance with modern human mind. Shiva's humour sense gains life when Shiva with a smile confesses to Nandi that, "he doesn't want to meet Pandit as he might bore him with some very confusing and abstruse philosophies"(93). These instances add to the ordinary life phases of Shiva at Meluha which differentiate ways, thoughts and legacy of Lord Shiva.

Inequalities prevailing in Meluha transforms Shiva, as he is forced to undergo purification ceremony. He rebels against Vikarma System as he himself feels inferior when Sati insists him to undergo purification. Shiva exclaims, "Is it because of me? Am I not allowed to touch her because I'm cast-unmarked?"(104). This event provokes him to ban the inhuman system. Here Amish provides Shiva with heroic stature which enables him to stabilise the social life of Meluha. He represents revolutionary mind and his act stands as a way to include subaltern to the main stream society. Here the protagonist imbibes the essence of Lord Shiva's ideologies which treat every living being as equal. 'Lord Ram's Unfinished Task' episodes Daksha's attempt to regain the confidence of Shiva. Shiva often objects the myth of Neelkant and questions those who believes in the legend, "why is a Neelkant required?" as he can't figure out any unfortunate occurrence in the near future. Thus the author highlights the absence of divine qualities in his protagonist to predict the future, which differentiates him from Lord Shiva. His ordinary human senses blur his sight to figure out evil and its implications in the society. Daksha confesses the prevailing unpleasant condition between Suryavanshi and Chandravanshi which generates enormous thoughts within Shiva. He acknowledges the words of his uncle, "Your destiny lies beyond the

mountains. Whether you fulfil it or run away once again, is up to you"(115). Shiva's mental trauma mirrors his strong belief that he is destined to perform other action than being the saviour of Meluha. Daksha enables Shiva to identify his role at Meluha by stating him as the successor of Lord Ram and assigns him with the duty to complete the unfinished task of Ram which includes restoration of peace and harmony through destruction of Chandravanshi. But Shiva refuses to accept the uninvited responsibilities, "They want me to destroy the entire way of life of eighty million people by myself! Are they mad? I don't really understand how one man like me can make a difference"(115). Even though Daksha tries to convince Shiva about the significance of his blue throat and the responsibilities it invites, Shiva fails to comprehend the thoughts and ideals of Daksha. Shiva admits that, "I'm no miracle worker, I can't snap my fingers and cause bolts of lightning to descend on the Chandravanshi"(118). In addition to, Shiva questions his own identity, "But how do you know that my blue throat makes me the genuine Neelkant?". Daksha through a mythical perspective tries to convince Shiva that he is the legendary hero for whom they have been waiting for centuries. Daksha reminds Shiva about the prediction of Pandit, "The Neelkant will be a foreigner. He can't be from Sapt-Sindu. And that he will get a blue throat on drinking the somras"(138). These mythical tales fail to stabilise the flickering thoughts of Shiva regarding his existence and his role in Meluha. Through above instances the author highlights the mental agony of an ordinary man who wishes to lead a normal harmonious life than being a legendary hero. "But why only me? Do I really have a destiny? I don't deserve any destiny. But Is this the chance to redeem myself?". These recurring thoughts signify the impotence and lack of confidence residing in Shiva to accept his strange unknown destiny phrased as legend Neelkant. Thus Amish succeeds in presenting his protagonist with all the baser instincts of a man which puts him apart from the heroic deeds, ways and life of Lord Shiva. Amish draws Shiva as an unfortunate man who

happens to acquire blue throat due to effect of some strange medicine.

The chapter 'Love and Its Consequences' episodes Brahaspati's attempt to rectify the thoughts of Shiva regarding the myth of Neelkant. Brahaspati provides a scientific explanation for the mystery behind blue throat. Shiva's habitat at mountain heights with less oxygen reduces the production of anti-oxidants hence somras has greater effect on him. Here Amish co-relates science and myth which adds a scientific dimension in justifying the mystery behind legendary figure Neelkant. By comprehending the scientific theory Shiva enquires, "So what do you think is the role that the Neelkant has to play in Meluha?"(140). This question signifies the inner conflict of Shiva to resolve the mystery behind the importance attributed to him by the unknown land. Lord Mahadev, the Universal progenitor is pictured as a helpless man who struggles hard to unveil the hidden realms of his own inner potential to perform the assigned function. Shiva always covers his blue throat to escape from public attention as he prefers to live as an ordinary man rather than being involved in the mystery of Neelkant.

Meluhan Emperor wants Shiva to be the saviour of Meluha. Shiva promises his support by admitting that, "I can't lead an army against Chandravanshi. I'm just a simple tribal leader. What difference can one man make?"(172). Even though Shiva promises to be the one man army he refuses to play the role of Neelkant. Faith of people upon Shiva renounces his ordinary human aspirations which provokes him to openly confess to Nandi, "I am no leader. And I am certainly not a destroyer of evil, I am not some god who will magically solve your problem"(177). Thus Shiva refuses the role of Neelkant. Here Amish draws human form of Shiva in contradiction to godly nature of Lord Mahadev. Nandi draws comparison between Shiva and Lord Ram to heighten the capability and potential of Shiva to resolve mythical mysteries. Shiva protests such comparison with gods, "How can this fool even compare me to Ram, the Maryada Purushottam, the ideal man?"(177). He admits the absence of

spiritual elements within him which elevates him to god. Thus Shiva understates him as an ordinary man who can't perform any magical illusions to drive away evil. Here Amish's Shiva clearly distinct from Lord Mahadev, the destroyer of evil.

Next section, 'Journey Through Meluha' focus on Brahaspati and Shiva. Brahaspati unravels the chain of events that lead to great flood. Flood resulted in the origin of six major rivers: Indus, Saraswati, Yamuna, Ganga, Sarayu and Brahmaputra. It is Lord Manu through his prayers fought against wrath of god to protect the land. These Universal mysteries connected to great flood startled Shiva. Through this episode Amish contradicts the myth in Shiva Purana which states Lord Shiva as the one behind the great flood. Shiva plays the role of an ideal leader throughout this series. He decides to abolish Vikarma System after his emotional encounter with an old man. He refuses to undergo the sudhikaran ceremony and offends the ideologies of Sati and Brahaspati regarding Vikarma System. Shiva protest that, "First I don't believe in the nonsense that he was punished for the sins of his previous birth. He was just infected by a disease, plain and simple"(200). In Vedas one's suffering is stated under the sins he performed in previous birth. Through Shiva Amish redefines the notion of sins and sufferings of man quoted in Vedas.

The chapter 'The Sun and Earth' reflects the depth of Shiva's tolerance for people and for the turn of events at Meluha. Lord Mahadev, the god of anger and ill temper who even turned Kamadev to ashes is restructured as a man of calm and composed nature. He tolerates the harsh mocking words of Parvateshwar without offending him. Brahaspati enquires, "I hope you don't get too upset by the ill-tempered things he says to you". Shiva calmly replies, "I don't, he is one man whose respect I would certainly like to earn"(205). Here the author throws light at humility of Shiva to treat others with much respect even though they ill-treats him. In 'Battle of Kanooj', the author reflects the transforming psychological aspects of the protagonist to intake

the role of a saviour. "I am the Neelkant", declares Shiva as he rages against the attack of Nagas. Here the author depicts evolution of Shiva from an uncouth tribal leader to a man of responsibilities under the created circumstances. He voluntarily subjects himself to transform as he realises that, "superstitions can only be countered by another strong belief"(247). As the chapter progresses Shiva turns out to be the saviour of Sati. Deadly wounded Sati recovers her health with the help of somras suggested by Shiva. He suggests somras for her as it once enabled him to cure his own physical disabilities caused by war. Ayurvati, the Meluhan doctor initially objects somras, "But that could also be because you are special, You are the Neelkant". Shiva offends her, "I didn't drop from the sky. My body is as human as Sati's as human as yours"(262). This declaration reflects the urge of Shiva to defend those who treat him superior. According to Shiva Purana, God Shiva can't be assumed as the one who follows or fit into Brahman rules. But Amish's protagonist is a true follower of Lord Ram's principle hence he abolishes Vikarma System from all sections of the society. He attributes benefit of a refined law to every strata of society and treats all as equal. Shiva supports his decision to renew law as, "Bad fate can strike anyone. It is ridiculous to blame their past lives for it"(279).

Lord Shiva, the creator of Universe is reconstructed by Amish as an innocent ignorant man who is unaware of the phenomenal aspects behind human sight and the elements which form normal white sunlight. It is Vasudev who teaches him about various biological and scientific aspects regarding human existence. A Vasudev's role is to perspire positive energy and the Mahadev is assigned to imbibe it. Shiva objects this law of Universe. He proclaims, "But I'm no Mahadev. My deeds till now don't make me deserve that tittle"(297). Reconstruction of Lord Shiva satiates a wide gap between the perceptions of Lord Shiva and Shiva in human form. Shiva, the god of paradoxes is negated as an impotent man who refuses to imbibe his potential for sustaining in this mysterious world.

The chapter 'Preparation of War' discloses the anger of Shiva for destruction of Mount Mandar, "The same bastard who attacked Sati in Meru, the same Naga who attacked in our return from Mandar. The very, bloody, same, son of a bitch", growled Shiva. Here Amish provides a typical ordinary language to Shiva to express the rage subsiding in his heart. Shiva refuses to join the army of Parvateshwar as his self-introspection generates doubt regarding his efficiency to conduct battle against Nagas. Even though he treats himself as an inferior, he later refuses to be a mere spectator for the upcoming battle as he states, "My position is with the soldiers on the battle field. A little bit more than a blue throat is required to beat the Chandravanshi"(337). Both these statements add light to hidden realms of Shiva which substantiate him as an elegant warrior than being a legendary Neelkant.

Lord Shiva, the Dakshinamoorthy, teacher of yoga and wisdom is restructured as a man who fails to incorporate his mind and body. In his dream his subconscious state of mind pictures him as the Neelkant but in conscious state he hesitates to accept the position of Neelkant. Shiva is a simple, kind hearted man who can be easily manipulated, hence Daksha utilises Shiva as a weapon to destroy his enemy Chandravanshi. Later Shiva acknowledges his mistakes when Anandamayi, daughter of Chandravanshi king claims, "The legend is not false and we are obviously not evil. It is just that you're naïve. You have been misled by evil Suryavanshi"(338). These statements evoke conflict within Shiva regarding his karma and his future course of action. The inner conflict projects the thought process of a helpless man who struggles hard to find solution to problems generating around him. Through this, Amish proves that god in human form too is prone to mistakes and misunderstanding.

According to Hindu Mythology, The Universe exists because of the balance between two opposing forces good and evil as the balance collapses Lord Shiva emerges to begin new life cycle. He is the one who "recognise evil

and lead men against it before evil raises its ugly hand and extinguishes all life”(Singh 2). In this series Amish redefines Shiva as a man who can't figure out evil, “What kind of a Mahadev am I? Why am I required? How am I to destroy evil if I don't know what evil is?”(394). Human senses and faculties limit his inner potential to seek beyond what he sees. The distinction between Devas and Asuras, how they are parallel to Suryavanshi and Chandravanshi are disclosed to Shiva in the chapter ‘The Question of Questions’. These revelations enable him to acquire baser knowledge to begin his journey to disclose and destroy original evil in the following series. By following a human centred approach the author concludes the first series by justifying his solution to the Universal question “Who is Mahadev?” through his protagonist Shiva, as he declares: “I am not the only one! For 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”(344) i.e. The one who disputes against evil and stands along with goodness will be glorified as Mahadev by the upcoming generations. Thus Shiva represents the voice of mankind that surmounts the godly essence within the deep inner consciousness.

CONCLUSION

Throughout the series the author perpetuates Shiva as a man who fails to comprehend the thoughts, actions and manners of people around him. Amish proffers him as the “one who often introspects about the mistakes that he committed in his past life and his total reluctance to be the chosen Neelkant, the destroyer of evil”(Singh 2). The second series *The Secret of the Nagas* carries out the adventurous quest of Shiva to smoke out different phases of evil. The third and the last sequel *The Oath of the Vayuputras* depicts the evolution of Shiva as Lord Neelkant through the destruction of Devagiri and the source of somras. According to the author a man transforms to god only through his karma. The underlying philosophical allegory of the fact is that, “God resides in each one of us, all we need to do is realise this and give

ourselves a chance”(Chatterjee 4). This statement is justified by Amish through the adventurous quest of his protagonist. Tripathi's Shiva is not god becoming man but man becoming god. The essence of *Shiva Trilogy* reflects Amish's inclination to picture Shiva as a human who stepped on this earth and later ascending to god. He restructures Hindu Mythical god Shiva as a fig-mental figure of 1900 BC. Throughout the series Shiva remains as an anti-hero who is in favour of smoking marijuana, prefers non-vegetarian food, have romantic stature and striking humour sense. Shiva stays as a tribal leader, a barbarian who continues his expedition through the darker shades of humanity and society to seek solution to unresolved riddles.

Amish redefines Lord Shiva as a typical human being who is devoid of any spiritual or unearthly values hence he substantiates the effect of somras on Shiva as a result of chemical reaction, which in turn is the resultant of a decision taken by council of Vayuputras. Thus Amish makes an attempt to humanise mythical mysteries associated with Lord Mahadev by incorporating scientific facts with religious mythical anomalies. The pursuit is undertaken by Shiva and his ways and thoughts reflect the anticipation of an ordinary man who is astound by various responsibilities. Shiva projects the baser instincts of a vulnerable human mind who hesitates to accept an extraordinary life merged out of obligations. Different shades of human weaknesses are delineated through the ways, attitude, thoughts and actions of the protagonist. His human instincts and limitations move astray when he decides to explore beyond the reality. His quest for evil makes him travel around India, the land of deadly mysteries. His discoveries, experience and observation transform his physical and mental anomalies which enable him to explore his inner potential where godliness resides. Quest to extirpate evil turns to the discovery of his own identity and true nature of evil. Transformation of man to god is subjugated by Law of Nature. To lead harmonious and progressive life one should follow the laws of nature and dharma. In the third series Shiva

succeeds in comprehending his dharma which elevates him as Lord of both the worlds.

Shiva Trilogy revisits several Hindu mythological stories. Amish elucidates his assumption, "all gods are once human beings, it was their deeds in human life that made them famous as gods"(Alakurajan 2) through the first two series. Every Hindu Vedic texts discuss life as a spiritual expedition in which one passes either through "the path of perfection or to the way to god". According to sadhana, "prime importance is for personality aspect of god"(Chatterjee 2). Hence we are not superimposing human perspective or features to god instead it's the adumbration of god himself. Every individual has personality, *Srimadbhagavatam* embellishes the fact that the supreme source within all also experience the effect of one's personality. Thus spiritual text teaches us to identify the presence of god residing within inner realms of human mind. Amish makes use of these spiritual lessons in *Shiva Trilogy* to justify the transformation of man to god. By reconstructing Lord Shiva as an ordinary man Amish succeeds in presenting the boundaries of limitations which suppress the ability of man to explore the inner potential residing within him. Through gradual transformation the author enforces the idea that god resides within every man and the thing is to identify the godly light and stimulate the energy in order to fulfil life and universal goals.

Through recreation *Shiva Trilogy* acts as a spiritual guide capable of providing enlightenment to modern generation. It teaches modern world to ignore manly obstacles to discover godly essence within oneself which could enable to establish peace and harmony in society. It emphasis the hardships and tolerance a man should get hold off in order to breach bodily limitations to experience the world beyond his reach. As Amish states, "Shiva is the hero of Manthan, or the symbolic and inevitable churning of change where the old makes way for the new"(Mandal 3). In a way, this is what's happening in the contemporary modern world where old norms and ideologies are challenged

by new thoughts and systems. Both seek unique way to counter each other which further lead to dissonance and negativity. Amish reminds the readers, "In Manthan the poison of negativity ejected out before the nectar of immortality and they dwell side by side"(Mandal 4). Through *The Immortals of Meluha* Amish suggests upcoming generations to find Mahadev within them who will be able to absorb the toxic negativity and channelize it, calming people by keeping them positive. Thus Amish assumes the role of an artist who provides a canvas to the reader to rediscover or to generate new thoughts which underlie every human subconscious that has once encountered with puranic myths.

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