

## THE IMMORTALS OF MELUHA AND THE SCIENCE IN THEIR BELIEF

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### ABSTRACT

One of the greatest tragedies of our time is this impression that has been created that science and religion have to be at war. The two generally deal with different realms, natural v/s spiritual. Disagreements do arise about where the boundaries between these realms lie when dealing with questions at their interface.

We could define that when it come to religion it is faith and when it come to science it is empirical evidence. This paper moves with this definition and see 'The immortals of Meluha' in this light. The immortals of Meluha, first part of Shiva trilogy, is a fiction by Amish Tripathi. The book deals with the rich mythological heritage of ancient India. Shiva is the protagonist, in today's world we know him as Lord Shiva.

The book is a tribute to Lord Shiva and the lesson that his life is for human beings. A lesson lost in the depths of time and ignorance by humans. This paper tries to explore the beliefs of the immortals of Meluha and the science in their belief.

**KEYWORDS:** Science, Religion, Belief, Interface

### INTRODUCTION

"The most beautiful and deepest experience a man can have is the sense of the mysterious. It is the underlying principle of religion as well as all serious endeavor in art and science." – **Albert Einstein**

The essence of Hinduism is contained in the Vedanta, the scientific and theological doctrine of Hinduism, and in the timeless wisdom of the Vedas. Its "Bible" is the Bhagavad-Gita, the divine song of God. Its scientific and intellectual contents have attracted the attention of some of the world's finest scientific and philosophical minds, such as Erwin Schrödinger, Robert Oppenheimer, Albert Einstein, and Aldous Huxley. It speaks of billions of years of history, creation of the universe, medicinal science, metallurgy, space travel, embryology, art, music, etc. It is no exaggeration to say that there is almost no branch of knowledge that is left untouched in the Vedas.

There are five core features in Hinduism: (1) God – Isvara, (2) Soul – Jiva, (3) Time – Kala, (4) Matter – Prakriti, and (5) Action – Karma. Of these the first four principles are eternal whereas the last feature is temporary. Based on these principles, Hinduism provides a deep knowledge and understanding of life and the universe. In its pure form, Hinduism is also known as Sanatana Dharma or the eternal function of the living entity. One of the unique features of Hinduism is that it provides a very vivid and broad description of God and His energies.

The Immortals of Meluha is the journey of an extraordinary man who explores his energies and gives new meanings to the concept of religion. The paper tries to read out The immortals of Meluha on the above mentioned ground.

### **The Law of Karma, Free Will and the Broader Perspective of Dharma**

In the Vedantic tradition there is the concept of a natural 'Law of Karma.' The law of karma is similar to the rules of action and reaction in Newton's Law. The results of the law of karma are singular and there cannot be any error in them. The answer to the question, 'why bad things happen to good people?' is 'karma'. The law of karma continues even though an individual may not remember the action that has caused the current reaction. The wheels of karma are driven by the free will and desire of the embodied spirits. The following lines from the text will explain the concept in more detail.

'Now who the bloody hell are the nagas? asked Shiva

"They are cursed people, my Lord," gasped Nandi. "They are born with hideous deformities because of the sins of their previous births. Deformities like extra hands or horribly mishapen faces."(59)

"Vikarma people, my lord,' said nandi sighing deeply '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 suffering 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 own order.'"(93)

"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 ....." (93)

"Who decides that the Vikarma people had committed sins in their previous birth?"

"Their own karma, my Lord', said Nandi, his eyes suggesting the obvious. 'For example if a woman gives birth to a still born child, why would she be punished thus unless she had committed some terrible sin in her previous birth? Or if a man suddenly contracts an incurable disease and gets paralyzed, why would it happen to him unless the universe was penalizing him for the sins of his previous life?'"(93)

Vedanta describes that the life in the form of human is the most superior form of life and that all other forms of life below the level of human consciousness cannot escape the chain of karma under normal circumstances. Therefore, Vedanta emphasizes the importance of the human form of life. If a person uses his or her free will for destroying innocent lives, he or she will be regarded as 'committing crimes against creation' and will be subjected to the law of karma.

### **The Somras Drink of Gods**

Somras was originally believed to have been created by none other than Lord Brahma. The process of its creation was kept secret and was only passed on to the seven men chosen by the Brahma himself. These Seven men were later known as the Saptarishis.

The Saptarishi's then passed on the same to their followers. The Somras was believed to have the medicinal power to keep the human body from degeneration. It is said, that just as the Oxygen helps us in breaking down the food particles and thus helping in digestion, it also oxidizes our body cells thereby causing degeneration of the body cells. But, the Somras helps the body to get rid of the extra oxygen and there by stopping the degeneration of body cells there by helping the body to stay young and look like young even if the actual age of the person is way beyond 100 years.

In Vedic period there were two drinks told. One is Soma and another is Sura. The two drinks that are quoted in Vedic texts are Soma and Sura. The Rigveda describes soma as a godly concoction, while sura is described as mainly a human drink. However, the Yajurveda defies sura and uplifts it to the status of soma.

The text also gives a clear picture of use of somras as drink of Gods and its scientific procedure of manufacturing.

“So what did Lord Brahma do?” asked Shiva.

“After a lot of research, Lord Brahma invented the Somras, which when consumed, reacts with oxidants, absorbs them and then expels them from the body as sweat or urine. Because of the Somras, there are no oxidants left in the body.”(135)

“Yes. That’s why all Meluhans are taught about two things from a young age—water and hygiene. Water is the cleanest absorber of the effluents that the Somras generates and excretes as toxins. Meluhans are taught to drink gallons of water. And everything that can be washed should be washed! The Meluhans bathe at least twice a day. All ablutions are done in specific rooms and underground drains then safely carry the waste out of the city.”(135)

“Manufacturing the somras is not without its fair share of difficulties. It requires various ingredients that are not easily available. For example, the Sanjivani trees. The manufacturing procedure also generates a lot of heat. So we have to use lot of water during the processing to keep the mixture stable. Also, the crushed branches of the Sanjeevani tree have to be churned with the waters of the Saraswati River before processing begins. Water from other sources doesn’t work” (136)

### **Explanation of God in Hinduism**

Hinduism also believes in the concept of one God. There have been many streams in Hinduism and many of them propound many aspects of God. From the Vedantic perspective however, the Personality aspect of God is most important. It is not that we give a human shape or characteristic to a god or anything whimsically. Rather it is the revelation of God Himself. A divine maxim is found in the Srimadbhagavatam (S.B. 3:26:49) stating that the cause exists certainly in its effect as well. Following this argument, since we all experience very clearly that all developed living beings have individual personality, it is certainly conceivable that the Supreme source of all must also possess personality. The text explains of a God in each and every human being.

“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)

### **Universe and the Concept of OM**

“Picking up a palm- leaf booklet and the thin charcoal writing stick from the side table, Shiva drew the symbol ॐ.”

Nandi frowned. “That is an ancient symbol that some people used for the word AUM.” But AUM? Asked Shiva.

‘My Lord, Aum is the holiest word in our religion. It is considered the primordial sound of nature. The hymn of the universe. It was so holy that for many millennia, most people would not insult it by putting down in written form.’

‘Then how did this symbol come about?’

'It was devised by Lord Bharat, a great ruler who had conquered practically all of India many thousands of years ago.' (56)

Thus Om mystically embodies the essence of the entire universe. This meaning is further deepened by the Indian philosophical belief that God first created sound and the universe arose from it. As the most sacred sound, Om is the root of the universe and everything that exists in the universe and it also continues to hold everything together.

With its threefold nature, special shape and unique sound, Om lends itself to a variety of detailed symbolic interpretations. The symbol of AUM consists of three curves (curves 1, 2, and 3), one semicircle (curve 4), and a dot. The large lower curve 1 symbolizes the waking state (jagrat), in this state the consciousness is turned outwards through the gates of the senses. The larger size signifies that this is the most common ('majority') state of the human consciousness.

The upper curve 2 denotes the state of deep sleep (sushupti) or the unconscious state. This is a state where the sleeper desires nothing nor beholds any dream.

The middle curve 3 (which lies between deep sleep and the waking state) signifies the dream state (swapna). In this state the consciousness of the individual is turned inwards, and the dreaming self beholds an enthralling view of the world behind the lids of the eyes.

These are the three states of an individual's consciousness, and since Indian mystic thought believes the entire manifested reality to spring from this consciousness, these three curves therefore represent the entire physical phenomenon.

The dot signifies the fourth state of consciousness, known in Sanskrit as *turiya*. In this state the consciousness looks neither outwards nor inwards, nor the two together. It signifies the coming to rest of all differentiated, relative existence. This utterly quiet, peaceful and blissful state is the ultimate aim of all spiritual activity. This Absolute (non-relative) state illuminates the other three states. Finally, the semi circle symbolizes maya and separates the dot from the other three curves. Thus it is the illusion of maya that prevents us from the realization of this highest state of bliss.

The semi circle is open at the top, and when ideally drawn does not touch the dot. This means that this highest state is not affected by maya. Maya only affects the manifested phenomenon. This effect is that of preventing the seeker from reaching his ultimate goal, the realization of the One, all-pervading, unmanifested, absolute principle. In this manner, the form of AUM represents the unmanifested and the manifested, the noumenon and the phenomenon.

As a sacred sound also, the pronunciation of the three-syllabled AUM is open to a rich logical analysis. The first alphabet A is regarded as the primal sound, independent of cultural contexts. It is produced at the back of the open mouth, and is therefore said to include, and to be included in, every other sound produced by the human vocal organs. Indeed A is the first letter of the Sanskrit alphabet.

The open mouth of A moves toward the closure of M. Between is U, formed of the openness of A but shaped by the closing lips. Here it must be recalled that as interpreted in relation to the three curves, the three syllables making up AUM are susceptible to the same metaphorical decipherment. The dream state (symbolized by U), lies between the waking state (A) and the state of deep sleep (M). Indeed a dream is but the compound of the consciousness of waking life shaped by the unconsciousness of sleep.

AUM thus also encompasses within itself the complete alphabet, since its utterance proceeds from the back of the mouth (A), travelling in between (U), and finally reaching the lips (M). Now all alphabets can be classified under various heads depending upon the area of the mouth from which they are uttered. The two ends between which the complete alphabet oscillates are the back of the mouth to the lips; both embraced in the simple act of uttering of AUM.

The last part of the sound AUM (the M) known as ma or makar, when pronounced makes the lips close. This is like locking the door to the outside world and instead reaching deep inside our own selves, in search for the Ultimate truth.

### **The Science behind Lord Shiva as Neelkanth**

“Ayurvati just pointed at Shiva’s neck.” Nandi looked up. The neck shone an eerie iridescent blue. With a cry that sounded like that of a long caged animal just released from captivity, Nandi collapsed on his knees. “My Lord! You have come! The Neelkanth has come!”(23)

The blue neck (Neelkanth) of Lord Shiva represents that one should neither take the vices out nor suppress them inside rather alter or modify them.

The blue colour symbolizes slow poison or the negative thoughts. The same in the neck indicates that the poison is neither to be drunk nor to be spitted out but to be kept in the throat temporarily so that it can be neutralized at appropriate time.

The well described slow poisons are attachments, anger, greed, desires and ego (Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha and Ahankaar).

Lets us take anger as an example. The root cause of any anger is non fulfillment of desires. Anger in turn can be expressive or suppressive. Expressed anger will lead to aggressive behavior and resultant social unhealthiness. It can also rupture a heart blockage and precipitating a heart attack or rupture of a blood vessel in the brain leading the brain haemorrhage.

Suppressed anger on the other hand will release chemicals in the body leading to illnesses like acidity, asthma, and diarrhea and cholesterol deposition in the blood vessels leading to future blockages. One can manage anger with taking the right and not the convenient action, neutralizing anger by willful cultivation of opposite positive thoughts etc. For example the process of silently passing on love to any individual can take away the angry thoughts from the mind (love is opposite of anger).

Anger evokes physiological responses that are potentially life threatening in the setting of heart blockages. Anger has many phases. Anger Expression Inventory, assesses anger frequency (trait anger), anger intensity, anger expression (anger-out), anger suppression (anger-in) and anger recall. In mythology it was the Shravan month during the churning of ocean (Samundra Manthan) that lord Shiva drank the ‘halahal’ poison and kept it in the neck. “Samundra Manthan” means the process of meditation done in the Chaturmas stating in the Shravan month and ‘halahal’ poison means the negative thoughts produced during the meditation process. It also means the origin of negativity in life when living a meditative life.

The message by Shiva was given in our Vedic knowledge and in different Upanishads. The scientists today are only validating those concepts by way of studied all over the world. And unless the messages come to us from the west we do not believe them.

## CONCLUSIONS

As the scientists are trying to further research the concept as mentioned in Vedas they are finding them to be very scientific in nature. So many herbs mentioned to be having medicinal properties are now being confirmed to have the same. Amish through his novel The Immortals of Meluha has also tried to vindicate that Lord Shiva was not an imaginary character from mythology but a person from the history. He has also taken Vedic concepts from the scripture and presented in this novel in the form of science.

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