



## SHIVA, THE REAL HERO IN AMISH TRIPATHI'S THE SECRET OF THE NAGAS

S.Ranjani

Ph.D Research Scholar, Vellalar College for Women (Autonomous), Erode.

Dr.S.Janaki

Assistant Professor, PG &amp; Research Department of English, Vellalar College for Women (Autonomous), Erode.

## ABSTRACT

Amish Tripathi turned to be a prolific writer from being a banker. He imbibes the mythological stories that are evergreen and transforms it with modernity to suit the contemporary times without blemishing their uniqueness and greatness. His family background being bibliophiles enabled him to become more knowledgeable about myth and other aspects related to it. In his work *The Shiva Trilogy*, he focuses on drawing the attention of the people towards current barriers that affect the society. The mythical characters and their endeavors serve to be a source for interpretation from social, political, ecological, and many more aspects. The Protagonist in the three novels is an archetypal hero who can be emulated to become a better human. Monomyth acts as an archetypal narrative that showcases the Hero's journey from his initial attempts and struggles to final success. Shiva an embodiment of strength, fierce nature, dancer and protector is projected with humane tendency, gets elevated to the position of Hero by his actions and noble thoughts. The mythological god is brought down to the level of a human being to illuminate the idea, that man can raise to the higher level of life if he realizes his mistakes, self worth and duty to society, and involve in meaningful endeavours. Nature being destroyed does avenge upon the humans and this truth is palpable through his work.

**KEYWORDS :** Hero, Monomyth, Mythology, Realization, and Self worth

## INTRODUCTION

Amish Tripathi acclaimed the status of the one of the best known fictional writer through his work *The Shiva Trilogy*. Tripathi's other works include *Ram Chandra Series*, *Suheldev*, and *Immortal India*. *The Secret of the Nagas* (2011), the sequel to *The Immortals of Meluha* (2010), holds Shiva as the protagonist, the destructor of the evil, one of the Trimurtis. Shiva is portrayed with human attributes to level up with the Man and to reinstate the idea that humans can be elevated to godly level by their deeds. Throughout the work, Shiva as well as the readers is put forth in search of what the actual evil is. In contrast, where the evil resides in a single person like Ravan in *Ramayana*, this work hits us up with a notion that evil resides in everyone, "Where there is good, there is evil". Sati, wife of Shiva is no less to him. They both have equal talent, quality and understanding. She accompanies him throughout his journey, guiding him. He is considered as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu to bring up peace and keep people out of misery. This research paper explores how Shiva is transformed from being a normal one to a divine being through the theory of Monomyth, which was later framed as twelve stages by the screenwriter, Christopher Vogler.

The term Monomyth was coined by Joseph Campbell in 1949 that details the journey of a Hero who goes through several phases in his life that includes his entry into an unknown place, succeeds in numerous hard trails, shedding ignorance and gets reward for his perilous and arduous journey. Shiva, a Tibetan inhabitant arrives to the great dynasty of King Daksha, the emperor of Meluha to assist and defeat the Chandravanshis. He is destined to be the Mahadev, the absolute savior of the people off from their miseries. By the pattern of Monomyth, this research work focuses on Shiva who undergoes and faces dangers to discover his own identity and fulfills his duty of destroying the evil imposed upon the people.

## ASENDANCY OF SHIVA

The Hero before getting involved in exciting and dangerous adventure that shapes his destiny is seen residing with his own troops in the initial phase, *The Ordinary World*. The Hero will not be aware of his destiny's significance. Shiva, belonging to the Tibetan tribe after marrying Sati becomes a member of the Suryavanshi dynasty that strongly believes in Lord Ram's noble principles. Here, Shiva, the Meluhan nomad, has urge to find the killer of his long lost friend and Meluhan scientist Brahaspati, whom Shiva assumes to be

killed by the Naga community considers them as evil people. Shiva travels to various places like Kashi, Branga and Panchavati to seek the answers for the questions of his self worth as the people believe him to be the legendary blue necked, Neelkanth. "Find the Nagas. They are your path to discovering evil. Find the Nagas" (11).<sup>1</sup>

The Call of the Adventure is the second stage where the Hero, unlike before, volunteers to go forward with the flow of his journey towards the ultimate understanding of his birth. In *The Secret of the Nagas*, Shiva is projected by accepting his call for adventure without reluctance in the initial stage. Unlike Shiva, there are Heroes who will not heed to their first calling itself by their destiny. They will neglect their call of the adventure either by their renowned comfort or out of fear. Shiva desired to know the worth of his living, find the reason for people glorifying him and consider him to be the ultimate savior. He has been trained unconsciously to be the extraordinary one, act as a guide and create a path for the future ones to follow. Unknown to the twists and endings that may change his life, he keeps faith in the destiny and travels further. The people blindly believe in the fact, that Shiva, Lord Neelkanth itself will wipe off their never ending miseries. The following incident narrates the people bowing before their savior with due respect and honor. "The angvastram that he wrapped around his body for warmth had come undone, revealing his neelkanth, the prophesied blue throat. The Branga soldiers around Uma immediately went down on their knees, heads bowed in respect, tears flooding their eyes" (160)<sup>1</sup>. Shiva's acceptance of the call signifies his readiness to engage in actions that reveal his true identity, protect the people and realize the truth behind the Nagas.

Meeting the Mentor is the phase where the Hero's confusions and ignorance get vanished, and the Hero continues with his journey. The mentor knows what is good for the Hero and assists him accordingly. Shiva gains knowledge and insight on Karma, good and evil, the importance of balanced mind not only from the Vasudevs, but also from his wife Sati, his friend Veerbhadra, Nandi and Parvateshwar, the head of the Meluhan armed forces. The Vasudevs are the tribes left behind by the great Lord Ram, considered as the previous Vishnu, aid Shiva in difficult times and help to seek the answers unfound by him. The conversation between Shiva and the Vasudevs stands as an instance; "I believe that when you discover the great evil of our times, you will not need any

explanation about how it attaches itself so deeply to us" (106)<sup>1</sup>. They point out to him, what he considers as evil is not the real evil and it can be discovered only by his total acceptance of the Nagas, though he finds it tough. Shiva considers the Hooded Naga as his prime enemy as he killed Brahaspati, but his hatred for the Naga gets minimized when he comes to know that the medicine that saved Kartik given by Vasudeva was bestowed by the Naga. Shiva bewildered of this incident, wants to discover the reason behind their assistance.

Tests, Allies and Enemies stage assists the Hero and moulds him for a better understanding of the good and bad ones that he encounters in his journey. The struggles he faces make him move forward to reach his ultimate goal. Here, in Amish Tripathi's *The Secret of Nagas*, the protagonist, Shiva to confront with the Nagas should know their residing place. Whereas, King Chandraketu though has huge respect for Shiva refuses to answer about the Nagas because they provide him the life saving medicine. Shiva having an entourage of loyal courtiers marches forth to detain the bandit Parshuram who knows about the preparation of the Naga Medicine. Shiva implements a strategy to get hold of Parshuram and his troops alive, without possible human loss. Shiva sails forth with a hundred soldiers in four vessels, and he makes the opposite troop believe that a misunderstanding occurs in Shiva's troops and they have got disbanded into two. Though Parshuram manages to kill Drapaku, one of the noble fighters of Shiva's army, eventually Shiva succeeds in imprisoning him by signaling his remaining troops to join him which outnumber Parshuram's troops. Parshuram, being a supporter of the Vasudeva does not acknowledge the fact, Shiva as Neelkanth until then, but after realizing the truth he cuts off his left hand as an act of repentance. Shiva does not hand over Parshuram to the Brangas. The incidents and persons that Shiva comes across bring about a change in his outlook towards men and matters.

In the Reward stage, The Hero after undergoing numerous hurdles is awarded for his tremendous work with success in his ultimate journey. The Reward he receives cannot be necessarily gifts or his ladylove. At times, the Reward can be the realization of ultimate truth. Parshuram discloses about the Naga's residing place. Shiva is in the state of dilemma regarding the Naga troops after hearing Parshuram's view about the Naga community, who are not actually evil. They provide beneficial helps to the needy ones regardless of their social status and standing. Shiva understands their real merit, and puts aside his personal dislikes and decides to heed their perceptions regarding Brahaspati. Shiva overcomes the problems, solves them by his astute realization and becomes aware of the reason behind people elevating him to godlike status.

Ganesh and Kali with great respect and faith on Neelkanth decide to reveal him the secret in Panchavati, the land of the five banyan trees, the Naga capital. In Panchavati, Shiva along with others, spellbound, witness the Naga children taken care of by the normal people who adopt them as their own children. They also see the parents accept their deformed children and reside with them. Unity and true acceptance are practiced and society prejudices do not exist there. Shiva wholeheartedly accepts Ganesh as his own child. Shiva takes absolute care of Ganesh during his hard days. Yet Shiva cannot get over the incident of Ganesh murdering his dear friend, Brahaspati. Shiva is taken aback when he sees Brahaspati alive in a transformed way, whom he believed to be killed by Ganesh. Shiva understands that thinking in a unilateral way will not help to see the reality and should be prepared to face what lies out of comfort zone and confront both good and bad in a balanced manner.

The novel reaches the climax in the third part of the trilogy revealing the ultimate twists. Shiva in his attempt to destroy

evil and restore righteousness lost his dear people as a price for it. Initially Shiva misunderstands the Naga Community and looks upon them as evil to be decimated. Whereas in the end, it is understood that not the Naga community but the somras is the terrible evil that resulted in causing the deformities in people and damaging the environment. The production of somras requires a lot of water. Though the powerful drink provides bliss to the royal family, it is the innocents who face the disaster. Shiva completely destroys somras to protect the people. Reading *The Shiva Trilogy* not only reveals the mythological incidents but also focuses on the significance of preservation and positive handling of Nature. The exploitation of nature will lead to collateral damage.

## CONCLUSION

Shiva outstands as an exemplary man to the mankind through his deeds. His persona is distinctive, and his quality thoughts and actions make him unique. He realizes his self identity and worth through his experiences and serving people. Shiva being a normal man gained greater heights through his thought provoking actions and selfless attitude. He sacrificed his dear men for the sake of people, set a pathway for us to march forward with pride. We should learn from Shiva to do good though we find it difficult, to arise as a better man. We, in day to day life run after the materialistic belongings, with inferior thoughts, and not understanding the fruitful meaning of the life which result in a worthless and miserable life. We should learn to encounter the trials and tribulations and endure pain and shortcomings with a steadfast and unbroken spirit. Exploitation of man and Nature has to be shunned for a rewarding human existence. We should see the world and ourselves in a positive outlook. God has gifted us valuable life to live better in most possible ways which has to be properly utilized, and turn to be a proud exemplification for the future generation.

## REFERENCES

1. Tripathi, Amish. *The Secret of the Nagas*. Westland Publications Private Limited, 2018.
2. Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Yogi Impressions, 2018.
3. <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/writing-101-what-is-the-heros-journey>