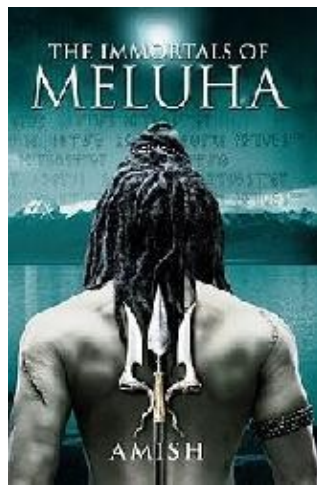


# the immortals of meluha-amish

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my own take on amish's smash hit.



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## the immortals of meluha-amish

when you partly fictionalise mythology (i'm not sure how the terminology originated), and as the introduction of the book suggests, mix it with historical facts, you literally attempt an evil kneivel across the grand canyon. as it is, mythology that concerns the people that gave the world, the gift of numbers, is so horrifyingly vast and intricate, it's something that was considered literal (pardon the pun) *hara-kiri* to attempt something with things that would be considered a dilution of the very aura of the beautiful religion. yet, when you're introduced to the very normal, and almost uncouth shiva as a tribesman heading a tribe around the tibetan highlands, you can't help but be hooked as curiosity about the, pardon the now abused term, *treatment* grips you. amish has actually used a watered down version of the hindu evolution theory as a base for this trilogy. through the first half, the book traverses along quite effortlessly, with the first hint of contemporisation of the legend becoming apparent when shiva, the tribesman after drinking a glass of *somras* apparently, an elixir of life, turns his throat blue, which according to the legend prevalent would signal the arrival of the next incarnation of god. the arrival of the incarnation, the magnanimity of the responsibility that comes when respect of that kind is accorded though very neatly done, seem somewhat rushed.

.the book then moves at breakneck speed (the overtly lucid narrative helps), introducing you to the various facets of author's version of india a thousand years before the common era. there's a brief mention of how the caste system originated, but smartly, the author just about brushes on the topic before dropping it altogether, steering well clear of the controversy.

sometimes, the very brusque running through of the narratives leaves a bad taste but then, one of the cornerstones of the success of this book probably is the fact that it doesn't drawl over details some readers might consider unnecessary or boringly descriptive. so as the book progresses, and shiva comes into his own, starting to be comfortable with the whole *legend* bit, even as he struggles to come to terms with being true to himself, you begin to slowly take the bait and start enjoying the goings on. surprisnly, even the tender issue of shiva's love interest (*sati*, a throwback to the original legend), is treated with a bit of care and is smartly woven into the story. however, as the story unfolds, the contemporisation begins to move into uncomfortable territory, as the timeline places lord shiva in between the seventh and eighth incarnation of lord vishnu after which, as if to confound the plot even more an allusion to lord shiva's other name *lord rudra* is introduced as another *avatar* of vishnu. meanwhile, the book never harps on these issues and respite is at hand as amish fascinates readers with a fictional race of people called *nagas*, who're introduced as the thriller element in the story. sadly, the twists introduced after this point, seem too *b-town* to be taken seriously. while the war with the opposing faction could be a highlight well worth mentioning, it's the slightly controversial bit about the whole human side of shiva coming to the fore that really leave a lasting impression. of all the characters, the protagonist's is the one with the most depth, and it shows. sadly, that's not to be said for the rest of the cast. the book, though does a very good job of building up the base for what could come later in the trilogy.

Since it is a fiction title, readers wouldn't go looking for an accurate portrayal of one of the most beloved deities of the hindu faith, yet when any individual attempts anything that includes god, it becomes his responsibility to not tamper with the legend, so as not to hurt any sentiments. true, amish, might've done all this, yet, somewhere, the narrative hints at a gross trivialisation of a faith that commands and deserves much more respect.

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