

Ethnobiological Analysis from Myth to Science XV: *Pancha Yajnya* (Five Sacrifices) – Human Body is an Epicentre of Renunciation

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ABSTRACT The human body is the epicentre where every individual performs the five great sacrifices (*Yajnya*), each and every moment throughout the life. Activity of the physical body ceases with the death (*Deva Yajnya* and *Bhoota Yajnya*), while his knowledge and perception migrates to the next life (*Rrushi Yajnya*) as *Samskara* (mental impressions). The genetic trait pass on to the next generation (*Pitru Yajnya*) and his social responsibility and humanity gets recorded in history (*Nrru Yajnya*) and makes a person immemorial.

INTRODUCTION

Pancha Yajnya is regarded as the highest scientific philosophy of Human Ecological responsibility since the Vedic age (Padhy 2013). The concept and performance of *Yajnya* (Sacrifice) is much more elaborated in *Karma Kaanda* (Methodology of rituals) of Yajur Veda, which are complicated, expensive and time consuming. But in epic Manusmriti, a post Vedic compilation and regarded as the first Ethical Law book of human society, a householder is prescribed to perform five sacrifices (*Pancha Yajnya*) as a part of routine activity in daily life. In fact, the epic has focused *Pancha Yajnya* as *Pancha Mahaayajnya* (great sacrifices) (Manu-III / 67, 69, 71). Use of an adjective *Mahaa* (great) before the *Yajnya* significantly focuses on the special importance of this activity. A householder is expected to perform this sacrifice process throughout his life with every sincerity, that is why the qualifying term *Mahaa* is used before *Yajnya*.

In the five sacrifices, one is expected to offer for his source of knowledge (*Rrushi Yajnya*); for his parents and ancestors (*Pitru Yajnya*); for the ecological factors, from whom he gets unclaimed gifts (*Deba Yajnya*); for the biodiversity around him (*Bhoota Yajnya*) and for the fellow human beings of his society (*Nrru Yajnya*). The Vedic based *Pancha Yajnya* philosophy depicted in Manusmriti is elaborated earlier (Padhy 2008a,b,c,d,e; 2011). The aim of the present communication is to explore the scientific merit of the human body based on the five sacrifices.

THE HUMAN BODY

The physical body of any living being is unique and considered to be a divine gift and blessing. Each being has his own speciality, the root of biodiversity. In animal kingdom, the human body is superior to all. In Bhagavad Gita, Lord SriKrishna has elaborated:

Idam Sariiram Kaunteya Ksetramityabhidhiyate
(Chapter 13/1).

Meaning: “Arjuna: This body is termed as a field”. The field nature of the body is elaborated by many elites from *Gyana* (Knowledge), *Yoga*, *Bhakti* (devotion), *Karma* (duty), *Sansaara* (worldly affairs), *Sanyasa* (renunciation) and Ecological point of view (Padhy 2019).

SriKrishna has elaborated 20 biological characters (Gita 10/4,5) as follows:

“(1) *Buddhi* (intellect) (2) *Jnaanam* (wisdom), (3) *Asammohah* (non-illusion), (4) *Kshamaa* (forgiveness) (5) *Satyam* (truth), (6) *Damah* (self-resistant), (7) *Samah* (calmness), (8) *Sukham* (happiness), (9) *Dukham* (pain), (10) *Bhavah* (birth), (11) *Abhavah* (non-existence, death), (12) *Bhayam* (fear), (13) *Abhayam* (fearlessness), (14) *Ahimsa* (non-injury), (15) *Samataa* (equanimity), (16) *Tustin* (contentment), (17) *Tapah* (austerity), (18) *Daanam* (charity), (19) *Yasah* (fame) and (20) *Ayasah* (obloquy) - these different qualities of beings (*Bhoota*) arise from me along (Gita 10/4,5).

The above referred twenty living characters, which are natural (divine originated) are not of the animals/human beings only, rather the plant world express such behaviour. Manusmriti (1/49) is the primary epic of the world, which has declared thousands of years ago that plants possess internal consciousness and experience pleasure and pain (Dash and Padhy 1997). Modern science has successfully researched over the secret behaviour of plants (Tompkins and Bird 1973). Even the minute possible organism, the bacterium is not free from aspects like intelligence, egoism, power of cognition and capacity for perception of subtle elements. The character variation among the beings is responsible for diversity in the biological world.

The characters presented by SriKrishna exists in different forms with different intensities in different organisms of the biodiversity; may be completely suppressed in one case or extraordinarily expressed in another organism, with diversified manifestations and evolution. The totality of the twenty characters in balance form is only/or may be seen in man. The human system too is not free from the variegation of sense perception and diversity of characters.

YAJNYA OF THE HUMAN BODY

Rrushi Yajnya

Mind is the Head of the departments in a human body. The mind as a whole is called *Antahkarana* in Sanskrit, means the internal doer. It is the internal instrument combination of the mind, the seat of thought and feeling, the thinking faculty or the mind as a whole. The *Antahkarana* has a group of working systems:

1. The sense organs (*Indriyas*)
2. The mind (*Maanas*)
3. The determinative faculty (*Buddhi*) and
4. Egoism (*Ahamkaara*)

Through the sense organs, the mind first perceives the sense objects in the form of sense powers (*Tanmaatras*: sound, touch, vision, taste, smell). By this, a desire to have the sense objects is implemented. A desire stimulates a thought; a thought embodies itself in an action. Each thought is an endless chain of cause and effect; each cause having an effect and each effect having a cause. Every action thus produces an effect that under goes

further screening through the mind stuff termed as the *Chitta* the platform of action of the *Maanas*, *Buddhi* and *Ahamkaara*, discussed earlier. The *Chitta* can be defined as the organised totality of conscious experience. Its distinguishing feature is awareness and capacity to know the environment. *Chitta* has two-fold behaviour, that is (1) conscious and (2) subconscious. The individual is aware of the first behaviour and record it as experience; while the second one is subconscious experience that occur without the awareness. The subconscious mind is a data-bank for everything, which is not in one's conscious mind. It stores beliefs, previous experiences, memories and skills. Everything that someone have seen, done or thought is also there.

The *Maanas* is the mind in real sense what a common man understands. It is the unit of performing mental process and the rational directing power behind all actions. It is the seat of desire associated with the five knowing senses and five working senses. It is responsible for thought, imagination, dreaming, affection, desire, moods and temper. The *Maanas* constantly vacillates between objects and is instrumental through which thoughts enter from the subjects.

The *Buddhi* is the seat of intelligence and capacity of determination. It is the basis of knowing, willing, feeling and resolving. It swells upon a thought that rises in the mind. *Buddhi* is analytic in nature and ever gives a positive decision (Padhy 2016).

The *Ahamkaara* is the individuating or arrogating principle. It is responsible for the position and identify of an individual. It is a self-conscious principle. It has the function of accepting or rejecting the demands or wishes made by the impulses, for its benefit as a whole (the final decision maker).

In toto, the *Maanas* perceives and presents, the *Buddhi* discriminates decides and resolves and *Ahamkaara* arrogates, which finally leads to rise of an action (*Karma*). In a body system the *Chitta* is the source of knowledge that directs the actions as if the teacher guides a student, the basic theme of *Rrushi Yajnya*.

Pitru Yajnya

We are indebted to our parents and ancestors (our *Gotra*, Padhy 2010), for the inherited genetic system that has started working for us, from the

moment of fusion of the sperm and egg in the mother's womb. It is our father's sperm which determines our sex; mother's egg cytoplasm that nourishes during the embryonic stage. The womb, the prime environment that supplies us food, shelter and space. The pain a mother takes to bring out a baby to this world, the responsibility of the parents to bring up a child upto adult; are the worthy contributions needs to be remembered, worshiped and obliged in the form of *Pitru Yajnya*.

Sex is biological and behavioural character for the whole biodiversity for propagation. But for man, there is every freedom for sex enjoyment (except certain social prohibitions) associated with an urge to have a child, the curiosity (probably) lakes with any animal or plant. Much has been focused in Indian ancient epics on conservation of sex and non-adulteration of genetic trait discussed below:

In yoga philosophy, it is claimed that all energy in a human body can be transformed into a highest form called *Ojas* (Padhy 2011). The *Ojas* are stored up in the brain, are most powerful and responsible for intellectual and spiritual power of a man. The yogi is capable of transforming all his electrical and magnetic powers of the body into *Ojas*. It is claimed that the sex energy (*Virjya / Reta*), which gives immense sensual pleasure on release, can be converted to *Ojas*, when checked and controlled its way out. That is why continence on sex and chastity is given prime importance in yoga, as well as in all religious orders of the world. The monks give up marriage, avoid sexual perseverance into their mind and adopt different yogic techniques to transform their sex energy into *Ojas*.

In epic Manusmriti, to follow the general conduct of a student it is advised (Chapter II / Verses 180, 181):

“Let him always sleep alone; not waste his *Virjya* (sperm) voluntarily; avoid women from looking and touching from the angle of passion. Even an unwanted involuntary discharge (waste) of sperm should be followed with a bathing and worshipping the Sun God with an appeal muttering three times the *Mantra*: ‘*Punarmaamee*’, means again let my strength return to me, for its recovery (Padhy et al. 2001).”

The third chapter of Manusmriti is devoted for a householder, which depicts the ethics of

marriage and principles of conjugal union with wife (III/45,46,47,50). Sixteen days and nights (in each month) including four days of menstrual period of a woman is declared as *Rootu Kaala* (ovulation period). Out of these sixteen days the first four, the eleventh and the thirteenth are declared to be forbidden days for conjugation; the remaining nights are recommended. He who avoids women on the six forbidden nights and eight others (out of sixteen), is equal in chastity like a student (*Brahmacharri*), in whichever order he may live. Also mentioned that:

“Let (the husband) approach his wife in due season, being constantly satisfied with her (alone); however he may also, being intent on pleasing her, approach her with a desire for conjugal union (on any day during the non-ovulation time) excepting the festival days (*Paarvanas*).” All these ethics on sex conservation focus on the importance of sex energy, the basic theme of *Pitru Yajnya* (Padhy 2010).

In Hindu philosophy it is believed that, a son is essential for a person to offer *Ssraadh* (yearly celebration of the death anniversary) after his/her death and to the forefathers and predecessors as well. In this context a Sanskrit saying is as follows (Padhy 2011): ‘*Putraarthe Kriyata Bhaaryaa*’ (wife is meant to have a male offspring for inheritance).

Virtually the Y chromosome, the male factor is the carrier of the *Gotra* factor (source of inheritance named after the original ancestor or sage) (Padhy 2010). In this context the production of *Varnassankara* (mixed *Varna*: so called intercaste product of present society) was not encouraged in Manusmriti with the following (X/24)

1. “Sex adultery of different *Varnas* leads *Varnassankara* (mixed caste child)”.
2. “Marriages with the women who ought not be married (inter *Varna* / caste) produce *Varnassankaras*”.

The phenomenon of *Varnassankara* was not at all encouraged in Vedic culture (Padhy 2010) which has a reflection in the first chapter of Gita:

“With the preponderance of vice, the women of the family become corrupt (after death of their husbands in war); and with the corruption of women, there ensues an intermixture of castes. Intermixture of castes spells doom for the family as well as are the destroyers of the family. The spirits of the ancestors are deprived of *Ssraadh* and

Tarpana (offering of water). By this the intermixture (*Varnassankar*) castes spoil the age long caste-traditions and family customs, which leads to hell for an indefinite period of time (Gita 1 / 41-44).” This shows that, the non-adulteration of sex system is the greatest honour to the ancestors, a token of the *Pitru Yajnya*.

Deva Yajnya

The physical body of every human being (and also of all living beings from bacteria to whale) is composed of five great elements (ecological factors) known as *Mahabhootas*: Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Ether (Padhy 2019). The existence of a conscious energetic personality as *Debataa* is realised within these ecological factors. These *Debataas* are regarded and worshiped as per Hindu tradition (Padhy 2008d). On this basis the corporal frame of any being is an integration of all these gods and a platform of *Deva Yajnya*. Similarly many body parts of a human body are honoured as working power point of different *Debataas*. An example is presented in Box 1. If by mistake any one’s feet touches some one’s body part; the first person with all humility respects the physical body of the second person uttering (*Narayana, Narayana*) the name of God. This is a significant tradition in India. The physical body is regarded as the temple of Divinity. In Bhagabad Gita SriKrishna has said: (Padhy 2019).

Box 1

Watching the palms of self in early morning

When someone gets up in the morning, he should first offer his prayers to the divinity and then pleasantly look to his own expanded palms uttering the following hymn:

“*Karaagra basatee Lakshmi, Karamadhyea Saraswati ;
Karamuule Baset Govinda, Prabhaate Kara Darsanam*”

Meaning: The goddess Lakshmi is situated at the tip of (my) palms, goddess Saraswati in the middle and at the base, god Govinda is existing. It is auspicious to look at the palms in the early morning. Laxmi represents the working life force, Saraswati is the source of knowledge and Govinda, the other name of Lord Vishnu, expresses the all pervade and wide spread of divinity.

“He who, established in oneness, worships me abiding in all beings; abides in me, no matter what he does (6/31)”.

“The life element by which this universe is upheld is my higher Nature (7/5)”.

“I am the life in all beings (7/9)”.

“Know that all beings abide in me (9/6)”

“I am equally present in all beings (9/29)”

“I am the consciousness (life energy) in living beings (10/22)”

“I am the seed of all life (10/39)”

“I support all creatures by my vital energy (15/13)”

“I am seated in the hearts of all (15/15)”

Any one is expected to take care of his physical body from health point of view, being self-controlled in his food and behaviour. A Sanskrit proverb says: *Sarira Maadyam Khaludharma Saadhanam*, means the body is to be given first priority in order to perform (spiritual) activity with certainty. In Yoga system a specific line, called ‘Hattayoga’ exists to develop all round perfectness of the physical body. Moreover, some one’s earning system should be free from unrighteous source to keep the body and mind sound.

Death is the end point of a life process. As per Hindu religion, the cremation of the corpses after death is the end scene of a lifelong *Deva Yajnya*. The intangible components of the physical body returns back to the surrounding ecosystem as *Pancha Mahabhoota: Kshiti, Aapa, Tejas, Vaayu, Aakaasa* (earth, water, fire, air, ether respectively).

Bhoota Yajnya

The sum total of biochemical reactions in a living system is known as Metabolism with two processes: Anabolism-constructive and Catabolism-destructive. During the former process the macro-biomolecules are synthesized with the combination of different inorganic atoms which requires energy; and in the later process biomolecules which are ingested in the form of food (or in stored form) are digested being associated with the cellular respiration process to release the energy. The two processes are complimentary to each other with the meditation of energy rich molecule ATP. The whole basic biochemistry is same from the simplest living organism bacteria to highest evolved man; may be the chain of chemical reactions differ in different systems with respect to their life style, environment, habit and habitat. In toto, the Vedic Indians have rightly focussed four important characters with any biological system

viz. *Aahar* (ingestion of food), *Nidraa* (rest-sleep), *Bhayya* (expression of reaction – self-protection) and *Maithuna* (sex for procreation). They had also deeply looked into the body physiology and metabolic system and broadly explained those as *Sangraha* (crystalizing), *Grahana* (assimilating), *Niskaasana* (eliminating), *Jeerna* (metabolizing) and *Sanchaalana* (circulating); the sum total of *Bhoota Yajnya* occurring inside any living system.

Significantly, the first hymn of '*Ishaupanished*' has projected: Let all the animates enjoy equal rights on the nature, as man is. If the right of a living organism is to be considered, it is not only ecological but also pertained to the basic theme of life force associated with the *Bhoota Yajnya* occurring inside every living cell (the cellular biochemical reactions).

A man (any other living organism also) normally perceives some amount of his body chemistry and acquainted with the external physiology which functions through his sense organs (*Indriyas*), but a major part of his internal activity occurs in obscurity. From birth to death the way some one grows, develops and changes, he seldom realises. The whole process can be equated with a *Yajnya* where the different internal body organs (Heart, Kidney, Spleen, Brain etc.) work with a sacrifice motive and render their services. No doubt, everyman demands that his body belongs to him; but who is he (?), who has no absolute control on his own body functions. All these process of internal activity of the body ends with the death; the *Bhoota Yajnya* concludes there for the present life episode along with *Deva Yajnya*.

Nrru Yajnya

Man is a social animal. The other members of the animal world have their society, but their social character is much more behavioural. Man has a special character Humanity, which focus on the ability to love, have compassion and be creative. Twenty human characters reflected in Gita are discussed earlier. A man identifies himself with his own Body (*Sarira*), a Name (*Naama*), his Genetic trait (*Gotra*), secondary *Gotra* factor (*Prabara*), Caste (*Jati*), Sub-caste (*Prajati*), Duty (*Karma*), Living Place (*Desha*) and Religion (*Dharma*). But, just after his death his physical body is identified as a *Saba* (Corpse), instead of all his above referred identifications.

But his human life style, interaction with his family members and the society, his dedications and contribution for the welfare of others are the *Nrru Yajnya* process for which he is identified and remembered. The fire of this *Yajnya* never shut off even after the cremation of his physical body is over.

The more humanity is enriched with a person the more he is an evolved human being. After death none can carry a handful of clod to the heaven, howsoever rich he may be on this earth. The beautiful figure and countless wealth turns zero at the time of death. Only the humanity within a person remains lively. Whatever good name and virtuous deeds he has earned in life is some one's real wealth. Social respect and recognition are not that important than abiding the social responsibility. Service to the humanity is the true *Nrru Yajnya*. The society will remember their dedication for all the times to come. This is the real justice one will do for his own physical body and character.

In Gita Sri Krishna has focused:

Arjuna!

God dwells in the hearts of all beings and His illusive power causes all beings to revolve as though mounted on a machine (vehicle of the body) (18/61).

LAST LINES

Pancha Mahaa Yajnya is the highest ecological ethics of Vedic age Indians from practical utility point of view (Padhy 2008a,b,c,d,e; 2011, 2013). When the *Yajnya* philosophy is focused on the human body, the five trends of sacrifice find different channels to express themselves. The *Rrushi Yajnya*, the source of knowledge directs the actions (*Karma*) of a person and creates *Samskara* (mental impressions) which gets recorded as *Karmic* seeds in the astral body and transmitted to the next life. *Pitru Yajnya* results to production of offspring and the genetic system migrates to the next generation.

The *Deva Yajnya* (Physical body) and *Bhoota Yajnya* (Body Biochemistry and Physiology) ends with the end of life cycle. *Nrru Yajnya* a social responsibility and humanity gets recorded in the history and makes a personality immemorial (Fig. 1). The philosophy of *Yajnya* is selfless sacrifice. The Nature, Biodiversity and Human

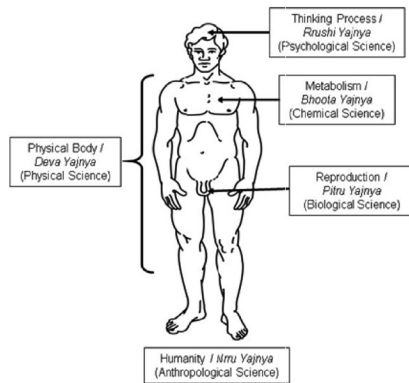


Fig. 1. Human body is an Epicenter of Pancha Mahaajanya (Integrated spot of five sciences)

Society around us has sacrificed for our very existence and one must learn to reciprocate the basic theme of *Yajnya*.

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