

## Ancient Science of India 6: Eco-Friendly, Scientific Heritage of Five Great Sacrifices (*PanchaMahaa-Yajnya*): Studies from Manusmurti, Bhagavad Gita, *Tantra* Philosophy, Yoga and Bible – A Brief Review

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**ABSTRACT** Manusmurti the first ethical law book of human society reveals the Highest Ecological Philosophy of the Humanity – “Let him never, if he is able to perform them, neglect the sacrifices: For the source of knowledge (*RrushiYajnya*); for his parents and ancestors (*PitruYajnya*); for the ecological factors, source of unclaimed gifts (*DebaYajnya*); for the Biodiversity around him (*BhootaYajnya*) and for the fellow human beings of his society (*NrruYajnya*).

### INTRODUCTION

Manusmurti is considered to be the first ethical law book of the world for the human society, scribed during the immediate post-Vedic period. The compendium has prescribed to perform five sacrifices (*PanchaMahaa-Yajnya*) as a part of routine activity in daily life of a house-holder (Chapter-IV-, Version-21). In fact, the epic has focused *PanchaYajnya* as *PanchaMahaa-Yajnya* (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*. The basic theme of the Five Great Sacrifices of the post Vedic period is elaborated in Manusmurti and in course of time is reflected in Bhagavad Gita, *Tantra* philosophy, Yoga and Bible ; is presented in nutshell in this communication (Padhy 2008a,b,c,d,e; 2010, 2011, 2020a,b).

### METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out following the “Literary Research” methodology in Ethno-biological research techniques (Padhy et al. 2015).

### OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

These five sacrifices elaborate one’s socio-ecological responsibilities, such as: (1) *RrushiYajnya* - (sacrifices for the source of knowledge-teachers), (2) *PitruYajnya* (responsibility for the parents,

ancestors and self-genetic system), (3) *Deva Yajnya* (protection for the environmental powers as Gods), (4) *BhootaYajnya* (care for the protection of biodiversity) and (5) *NrruYajnya* (Positive interaction with fellow human beings of the society). Men should be committed to show obligation to the above environmental constituents as their ethical and ecological responsibilities. The analysis of the scientific basis behind the religious events of *PanchaMahaa-Yajnya*, proves its aim to raise eco-consciousness amongst the human environment. These five sacrifices amounts to be as the highest ethno-ecological philosophy of the world, originated in the Vedic age and still practised today in the Indian social scenario being modified in different turns and tunes. In course of time the philosophy of *PanchaMahaa-Yajnya* slowly entered into the daily rituals like *Tarpana* (ceremonial offering of water to all concerned) and *Bisswadeva Puja* (offering of food) of a householder to reiterate his ecological responsibility.

Further, with the growth of *Tantra* philosophy (Spread to save), *PanchaMahaa-Yajnya* took a turn of worshiping iconic representatives, popularly known as *PanchaDevataa* (Five God powers). Amongst them, *Ganesh* is comparable with the community activity or *NrruYajnya*; obligation offered to Sun God (*Soorya*) is a token of respect and remembrance to forefathers represents *PitruYajnya*; *Vishnu*, the fostering power of bio-diversity, represents *BhootaYajnya*; *Ssiva* is comparable with the ancient sages and seers, a source of knowledge, universal teacher equalised with *RrushiYajnya* and *Durgaa*, an integration of all Godly powers, represents the *Deva Yajnya*.

Gita has elaborated the spectrum of sacrifices in its 4th chapter *Jnyaana Karma Sanyaasa Yoga* (The yoga of action and renunciation). The integration of the Vedic age *PanchaMahaa-Yajnya* philosophy in Gita says that: one should work with selfless motive for sacrifice (*NrruYajnya*) following the foot prints of his ancestors (*PitruYajnya*), those who had achieved perfection through sacrifice. The skill of the selfless work is to be learned from Vedas (Source of Knowledge -*RrushiYajnya*) and to be implemented in practical life as well to foster the nature (ecological powers - Gods - *Deva Yajnya*); in return rain is bestowed (by Gods) as gift that produces food for sustenance of life and proliferate the bio-diversity. Man, identified as one amongst the biosphere, should have a moral responsibility for the protection of all living beings (*BhootaYajnya*). In the present scenario the theme of *PanchaMahaa-Yajnya* has turned to a community activity and celebration instead of an individual commitment. It is systematically celebrated through festivals of the rainy season in India as a welcome episode to rain and expression of gratitude to the environment, exhibiting through festive functions.

Yoga is the practical science of realisation. The yogi controls breath, the life force (*BhootaYajnya*) diverts his vital sex energy into a super form, the *Oojas* (*PitruYajnya*); activates the vortex points of the spinal column (*Deva Yajnya*); attains the supreme knowledge of self-realisation (*RrushiYajnya*) and finally his self upliftment encourages all concerned to progress in the line of Yoga (*NrruYajnya*).

The human body is the epicentre where every individual performs the great sacrifices. The thinking process is the *RrushiYajnya* that controls every activity. The physical body is the centre of *Deva Yajnya* which is composed of *PanchaMahaabhoota* (five ecological factors) inside which the *BhootaYajnya* as metabolism is going on. The reproductive system represents the *PitruYajnya* and the humanity of a person focus over *NrruYajnya*.

More to add here that, the Vedic age *PanchaMahaa-Yajnya* philosophy is lucidly presented in the Ten Commandments of Bible, Old Testament. Lord's teaching to Moses reached to common people who educated them as their Guru-Teacher (*RrushiYajnya*). The whole process of *Deva Yajnya* is nicely focused in the first four commandments. Honouring the father and mother is emphasized in the fifth commandment,

is the basic theme of *PitruYajnya*. The sixth commandment 'You shall not murder' focus towards non-violence (*BhootaYajnya*). The last four commandments clearly focus on the social relationship of a person the basic theme of *NrruYajnya* concerns to sacrifice for others and obligation for society and mankind. Both Christianity and Islam have full faith on the Old Testament.

Let it be any religious epic, the basic theme of each one is same for the humanity. Since the origin of the Philosophy of *PanchaMahaa-Yajnya* in course of thousands of years may have undergone metamorphosis, yet its basic concept remains unaltered and unutilized, readily acceptable for the present society, amenable worldwide, to raise up eco-consciousness in the human environment.

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