



Review Paper

Theory of Manu and human qualities in every age according to the Upanishad and Purana literature

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Abstract

Intelligent beings, often referred to as atma or spirit, are described as "atma" in the Upanishads, or as Brahman. Brahman represents the principle of the universe. Seeking guidance, humans turn to the words of God found in the Puranas and Upanishads. The concept of the manu theory and human qualities in different eras is prevalent in Vedic literature. The Puranas and Upanishads contain a section dedicated to the theory of manu and human qualities for each era. The Puranas hold a significant and strategic position in the hierarchy of the Vedas and Hindu Literature. This research aims to analyze the Manu Theory and human qualities of each era as described in Purana and Upanishad literature using qualitative descriptive research methods. The findings of this research reveal that the concept of manu theory and human qualities, as depicted in Purana and Upanishad literature, reflects Hindus' pride and increasing belief in the teachings of Hinduism as a suitable guide for navigating life in this world and the natural environment.

Keywords: Purana; Manu theory; Upanishad

1. Introduction

Hinduism teaches that the universe is the tangible or virtual form of Brahman, the 'Almighty God,' who is depicted as the Cosmic Man (Surpi, 2021). The universe, as the Cosmic Man, is described as an immense figure larger than the universe itself. Hinduism portrays the universe as living beings, much like humans. According to this belief, the universe and its contents originate from God, making humans and the universe essentially the same, differing only in scale and quantity (Swami, 2003). This difference in scale leads to the universe being referred to as the macrocosm ('big nature') and humans as the microcosm ('small nature'). Among all existing macrocosms and microcosms, humans are considered the most perfect beings. These concepts are all found in the Vedas, which predate the written records of modern humans. The Vedas were initially part of an oral tradition, later recorded in writing, and eventually returned to oral tradition. As a result, the Vedas contain both ancient and modern knowledge.

According to Hindu belief, the universe was formed gradually and evolved over time. The Upanishads describe the creation of the universe as a step-by-step process, likened to

a spider spinning its thread. Brahman creates the universe through this gradual process. Brahman creates the universe through 'tapa,' radiating heat, and then merges into the creation after its completion. The Puranas describe the formation of 'Brahmanda' at the beginning of the creation process, as well as the formation of 'Purusa' and 'Prakerti,' two forces that combined to create the universe (Titib, 2003).

Given this background, the actual theory of man and human qualities in each era according to Purana and Upanishad literature is a subject of interest. The purpose of this scientific article is to explore and understand the theory of man and human qualities in each era as described in Purana and Upanishad literature.

2. Methods

This study employs a qualitative (interpretive) approach. Due to the complexity, dynamism, and depth of meaning involved, it is not feasible to gather data through quantitative research methods such as tests, questionnaires, or interview guides. Qualitative research aims to provide in-depth descriptions of speech, writing, and behavior observed in individuals and groups. The goal of qualitative research is to identify patterns that may lead to the development of a theory (Kaelan, 2012).

As stated by Noor (2021), qualitative research involves a detailed examination of words, comprehensive reports from respondents, and the study of natural settings. This type of research does not involve calculations or the use of strict and formal statistical formulas. According to Bogdan and Taylor, qualitative research generates descriptive data in the form of words (verbal, religious, social, cultural, philosophical), as well as notes related to meaning, values, and understanding. Through this research, it is anticipated that various issues related to the Manu Theory and Human Qualities in Different Eras According to Purana and Upanishad Literature will be described and integrated.

3. Results and Discussion

Hinduism, with the Vedas as its sacred scripture, is considered the oldest religion in the world (Bleeker, 2004). According to Sivānanda, the Vedas are the most ancient sacred literature in human history and the main source of religion. Originally, the Vedas were only recited, but in recent centuries, they began to be written down as human memory deteriorated. The Vedas are believed to be eternal and impersonal.

The exact date or time of the revelation written in the Vedas is uncertain and cannot be determined by religious historians such as Joachim Wach and others. Sivānanda also emphasized that the Vedas embody eternal spiritual truths and divine knowledge, which cannot be destroyed even if books are lost. Knowledge is considered eternal, and therefore the Vedas are also eternal (Donder, 2007).

The concept of divinity (theology) in Hinduism is often found in the Vedas and their codification. The Puranas, a part of the codification of the Vedas that contains divine teachings, hold a significant and strategic position in the hierarchy of the Vedas and Hindu literature. Compiled by the Rishis, the Puranas were intended to elucidate the extensive sacred teachings of the Vedas, encompassing spiritual content, philosophy/tattwa, morality, and more. However, this article specifically focuses on discussing the concept of divine philosophy in the Puranas (Aryatnaya; 2020).

The term "Purana" is derived from the words "Pura" and "Ana," where "Pura" means ancient or ancient times, and "Ana" means saying. Therefore, the Puranas are ancient histories that hold a significant position in the endeavor to comprehend the Vedas. According to the sacred book Sarasamuscaya, the Vedas should be thoroughly studied through the Itihasa and Puranas, which contain the ten characteristics: Sarga (creation in subtle forms that are not visible to the eye), Visarga (creation of elements visible to the naked eye), Vrtti (food), Raksa (protection of the universe), Manvantara (periodization of

Manu), Vamsa (dynasty of kings), Vamsanucarita (Work of the Almighty God, devata, and dynasty of kings), Samstha (physical destruction of the universe), Hetu (urge to do karma), and Apasraya (final support or seven endings or highest realities) (Titib, 2003).

The Purana is a compilation of stories about legal evidence, religious ceremonies, life principles, music, dance, drama, art, governance, people's rights and responsibilities, customs, health, and more. Its aim is to elucidate the sources of good and evil, where doing good leads to heaven and doing evil leads to hell (Nala & Wiratmadja, 2012). Among the ten aspects found in the Puranas, the most significant is the topic of creation or heaven, as the process of creating the universe is one aspect of Cosmology. Therefore, based on these diverse viewpoints, it can be explained that the Puranas are part of Vedic literature containing religious stories that guide human life. The Puranas serve as encyclopedias and compendiums of the Vedas and Hindu literature. By reading the Puranas, Hindus who are unfamiliar with the teachings of their religion will find it easier to understand, appreciate, and practice. In the Purana books, various aspects of Hindu religious teachings can be found, ranging from theology (sraddha), ethics (morality), and rituals (Suadnyana, 2020).

The word Upaniṣad is derived from the words "upa," meaning near, "ni," meaning below, and "sad," meaning sitting. Therefore, Upaniṣad refers to a group of sisya (sitting participants) sitting near the acarya (educator or teacher) (Sutrisna, 2009). According to Sura, the Upaniṣad Scriptures enhance the understanding of the Vedas, giving them formal meaning and comprehension (Surpi, 2021). Without this explanation, symbolic mantras cannot be fully understood (Sutrisna, 2009).

In the study of life philosophy, a student must establish a close relationship with their teacher. This closeness is not only physical but also mental, allowing students to listen, absorb, and appreciate the teachings conveyed, especially those that are secret. The Upaniṣads reveal the essence of truth in the universe and philosophically explain the highest reality, enabling humans to rationally accept everything contained in the Vedic Scriptures. Broadly speaking, the Upaniṣads delve into discussions about Brahman, the Jivātman or individual self, the universe, and sadhana or the means of attainment. In fact, the Upaniṣad scriptures educate humans about the philosophy of life in order to guide them in living according to Brahman, Atman, Jagatraya, and Sadhana to achieve their goals.

3.1 Creation According to the Puranas

All Puranas acknowledge that before creation, there was nothing in the world; the universe was empty and dark without any characteristics. In this emptiness, there was only God, referred to as Nirguna Brahman (in formless form), which is described as light in the Puranas. Before the universe became visible in a material form, it existed as an idea in God's mind. All the fundamental material elements of the universe were within God's womb. God in his 'formless form' then used the potential of His mind to carry out creation, where initially there was only God's mind (manah). The only reality in the universe is thought.

Within God's mind are the ideas of consideration (budhi) and will or desire (ahamkara), permeating all the fundamental natural material elements that make up the universe: prthivi (earth), apah (water), teja (fire), bayu (air), kham (ether), budhi (taste), manah (mind), and ahamkara (ego). The potential of God's mind has three dimensions (Tri Guna), namely Sattwam, Rajas, Tamas. Through the potential of God's mind, the process of creating the universe, previously hidden in God's womb in the form of astaprakrti, was ready to begin. The basic material of the universe, astaprakrti, contains the Panca Maha Butha (five gross material elements) as well as three finer elements: Budhi, Manah, and Ahamkara (intellect, mind, ego).

In the process of creation, Brahma is symbolically depicted as a "cosmic being" with the ability to give birth. Brahma is described as a creature larger than the universe itself. Deva Brahma then split the enormous egg into two parts horizontally, with one part

becoming the sky and the other part becoming the earth. After creating the earth, God (Brahma) felt uncomfortable with the vast universe being empty and inhabited only by Himself. Therefore, Brahma began to create various creatures. The first beings created were the devas, sages, and main humans who would carry out subsequent creation tasks. Brahma created devas such as Deva Agni (deva of fire), Deva Baruna (deva of water), Deva Pavana or Deva Bayu (deva of wind), and others. Using His mental power, Brahma then created Manu from within Himself. Because he was born from within himself, the main man (cosmic man) was given the name Svayambhu Manu, which means "born from himself," and was none other than Brahma himself.

3.2 Creation process in Upanishads

The process of creation, as described in the Upanishads, involves the creation of humans and the universe, with humans being referred to as intelligent beings or spirits, known as 'atma' or 'Brahman' in the Upanishads. 'Brahman' represents the principle of the universe, while 'atman' represents the principle of personal nature. The creation process involves Purusa and Prakerti, with the universe being called Bhuwana Agung and the human self being called Bhuana Alit. The creation of the universe takes place in several stages: Purusa and Pradana, Citta and Guna, Budhi, Ahangkara, Manah, Dasendriya and Panca Tanmatra, Panca Maha Butha, Bhuwana (universe), and all creatures (including humans). Cosmic intercourse occurs from the first creation, leading to cosmic evolution and the formation of everything in accordance with the stages of creation.

In humans, the creation process involves Purusa becoming Jivatman, while Prakerti becomes the gross body or Sthula Sarira. Sukhma Sarira, also known as linga sarira, is derived from budhi, manah, and ahangkara, which are collectively referred to as Tri Antah Karana (three final causes). These inner tools determine a person's disposition or character. The human senses are referred to as Dasendriya and consist of Panca Budhindrya and Panca Karmendrya.

The Sthula Sarira, which is derived from the Panca Tanmatra's nature, originates from the Panca Maha Butha as described below: (a) Bones, muscles, flesh, and all solid elements are derived from ghanda and mother earth, (b) blood, fat, glands, bile, body water, and all elements seeking their nature originate from taste or what, (c) body heat, eye light, and all hot and radiant elements originate from the form or teja, (d) breath and air in the body come from sparsa or wind, (e) the chest cavity, the oral cavity, and all other cavities originate from sabda or akasa. Additionally, the Sthula Sarira or the human gross body contains the elements of Sad Kosa (six envelopes) and Dasa Bayu or Dasa Pranaya (ten kinds of air in the human body).

3.3 Manu Theory and Human Qualities of Every Age according to the Puranas and Upanishads.

The cycle of birth, life, and death continues without interruption. Throughout this cycle, all living beings experience a decline in quality. The concept of Manwantara, a unit of time in Hinduism, is explained in the periodization of Manu. It consists of 71 Mahayugas, and according to Hindu mythology, the world will be destroyed after the passing of 14 Manvantaras. Currently, the world is in the seventh Manvantara, with seven more to follow before its destruction.

In each Manvantara, humanity is said to be descended from a Manu, who is the ancestor of humans. The present Manvantara is governed by Vaiwaswata Manu, who lived during the Satyayuga era. With each new Manvantara, not only does the Manu change, but also the saptarishi, the gods, and even those who hold the title Indra are replaced. Information about the 14 Manvantaras can be found in various Puranas, but there are often discrepancies in the information provided by different Puranas (Titib, 2003). According to the Puranas, the world is divided into four ages, starting with Satyayuga (the age of

righteousness) and ending with Kaliyuga (the age of darkness). After Kaliyuga, a new Satyayuga begins, forming the cycle known as Mahayuga. According to the Brahma Purana, one Mahayuga lasts 12,000 divine years or 4,320,000 human years (Titib, 2003).

In the Satyayuga (Kertayuga) or golden age, which lasted 4,800 deva years (1,728,000,000 human years), all humans possessed 100% divine character. Then, in the Treta Yuga, which lasted 3,600 deva years (1,296,000,000 human years), humans maintained 75% of the qualities of divine character. Next is the Dwapara Yuga, which lasted 2,400 deva years (864,000,000 human years), during which all humans had 50% of the qualities of divine character. Finally, in the Kali Yuga era, which lasted 1,200 deva years (432,000,000 human years), humans possessed only 25% of the qualities of divine character. After these four yugas are over, the universe will be merged back into its original form. The universe will be recycled to return to the nature and character of the Kerta Yuga. One cycle from Kerta Yuga to Kali Yuga is called one kalpa. $1 \text{ kalpa} = (1,728,000,000 + 1,296,000,000 + 864,000,000 + 432,000,000) = 4,320,000,000$ years. This world has experienced a cycle of kalpa many times, and no one knows except the Eternal One, because the process is the same as the essence of the Eternal and Infinite God, "without beginning and without end" like a circle. From the nature of God, all creatures appear and disappear repeatedly, powerless (Bhagawadgita IX . 8).

3.4 Characters of Kertayuga Satyayuga ages

The Kertayuga, also known as Satyayuga, is the first of the four Yugas. The Yuga cycle is a wheel that rotates continuously. After the end of Satyayuga, it returns to Satyayuga after a long period. Satyayuga lasted for approximately 1,700,000 years. Kertayuga is a peaceful era during which no one commits adharma, even in thought. People in this era always followed the path of truth and never caused harm to other living beings in thought, word, or action. The characteristics of human life during this time included acting for the happiness of others and living in accordance with dharma. This era is often referred to as the Satya Yuga, signifying an age of truthfulness and loyalty. It was a golden age when people were close to God, and crime was almost non-existent. Religious study and meditation were highly valued during this era. According to Nathashastra, there was no Natyam (drama) during the Satya Yuga because everyone was content. People did not need to write books as they could communicate directly with the Almighty. The need for specific places of worship was absent, as people felt the presence of God everywhere and could worship anytime and anywhere. The people of Satyayuga had a deep awareness of Dharma (truth, virtue, honesty), and their culture and morals were noble and uncorrupted. Truth was highly esteemed as a way of life, and there were very few crimes or transgressions of the rules, earning this era the title of the "golden age."

3.5 Characters of Tretayuga ages

Tretayuga is an age of spirituality. Spiritual qualities are very clearly visible. Religion is the basis of life. Despite this, people began to sin and criminals began to emerge. But everything still works in balance. Activities related to religion and spirituality occur everywhere and are very closely related to human life. In this era various events occurred. The most famous event is the emergence; the fifth, sixth and eighth avatars of Vishnu, namely: Vamana, Parasurama, and Rama. In this era, someone who is clever, has broad knowledge and insight, and is a philosopher will be highly respected.

3.6 Characters of Dwaparayuga ages

This era lasted for 864,000 years. According to the Puranas, Dwaparayuga ended when Krishna returned to his eternal residence in Waikuntha. During the Dwapara Yuga, humans began to act more rationally, but the number of criminals and sinners increased. Deception

and lies began to emerge, and the performance of rituals became a priority. A person who could carry out ceremonies was highly respected. The end of the Dwapara era marked the beginning of the final age, Kali Yuga.

3.7 Characters of Kaliyuga ages

The Kali Yuga era is characterized by destruction, with many people starting to forget about God. Human morals are severely compromised, and men hold power while women are objectified. Many students dare to defy their teachers, and dishonest means of earning a living become common. Falsehoods, lies, crimes, and acts of violence abound. Money holds great power in this era, and laws and positions can be bought with it. Currently, many religious leaders have failed to fulfill their duties properly. There is a trend for the position of religious figures to become a kind of commodity with economic or political motives. According to Hinduism, the universe is nothing but the physical form or gross form of God the Creator, and nature is none other than human beings themselves.

Viewing the universe as God, as a living entity, as a sibling is a profoundly noble perspective. This mindset fosters pure love and compassion for all of God's creation in the world. Human beings play a crucial role in cultivating a sense of love for the universe and its inhabitants. Recent natural disasters in various parts of the world are attributed to humanity's lack of love and respect for the Earth and the universe. Humans have become excessively arrogant, considering themselves the most superior beings, and have lost touch with their humanity and their connection to God.

In the current era of Kali Yuga, it is exceedingly rare for humans to exhibit the level of patience and endurance that is expected by Time. Many individuals and groups seek to approach things in a practical and pragmatic manner, with a focus on speed, accuracy, minimal effort, maximum profit, and effectiveness. This attitude is a characteristic of humans in the Kali Yuga era, where they take things for granted and avoid inconvenience. Adhering to these principles does not contribute to the advancement of human quality. Moreover, there are numerous negative behaviors, such as disrespecting the teachings of other religions, cursing others, blaming others, and even resorting to violence.

All the aforementioned statements present a challenge to humanity's own teachings. If only humans were willing to set aside their estrangement from nature and instead collaborate with nature, then surely the universe, as the space where humans reside, would be open to embracing and nurturing humanity with love. Nevertheless, humans possess extraordinary abilities in the form of the capacity to enhance their skills and awareness (Surpi, 2022). Human cognitive intelligence can be developed through learning. Therefore, when humans are able to increase their awareness, they become the noblest creatures on earth (Surpi and Ardana, 2022). This represents the fundamental essence of birth and its role on earth.

4. Conclusions

Humans are living beings (bodies with souls) endowed with reasoning abilities. It is this reasoning that elevates humans to a superior status compared to other creatures. Humans originate from Brahman, as they possess what is known as atman, a small spark from Sang Hyang Widhi, whose consciousness has been influenced by the power of Maya, leading to the loss of their original consciousness. The mind is intended to enable humans to discern between good and bad, and to think before taking action. It is through the mind that humans are expected to understand their origins, goals, duties, and obligations. This knowledge should inspire their actions and keep them on the right path in accordance with ethical and dharma teachings found in religious doctrines. However, humans are also vulnerable beings, unlike animals that can stand, fly, and walk immediately after birth without

assistance. Understanding this vulnerability is crucial in recognizing and separating the essence of the body from the true atman.

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