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## CULTIVATION OF RELIGIOUS CHARACTER EDUCATION AT THE MEPEPADA CEREMONY AT PURA AGUNG KERTAJAYA TANGGERANG

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### Abstract

*The yadnya ceremony is the basis of Hindu religious teachings, including tattva and ethics. Hindus implement religious teachings through the yadnya ceremony. There are five yadnya that are always carried out, namely Dewa Yadnya, Bhuta Yadnya, Manusa Yadnya, Pitra Yadnya and Rsi Yadnya. Interestingly, every Mupuk pedagingan ceremony is always accompanied by a mepepada ceremony, such as the Numpuk pedagingan ceremony at Pura Agung Kertajaya Tangerang. This mepepada ceremony is interesting to study, especially in instilling character education values. The research method used is qualitative, data collection through interviews and observation. The results of the research show that there is an instillation of religious character education at the mepepada ceremony: belief in Lord Shiva in the form of Rare Anggon descending into the world to pick up the atman of the animal that is used as his yadnya, believing in the existence of the same atman for both animals and humans, believing that the good karma of the animal that is being used as his yadnya will receive purification and punarbhawa believes that the evolution of animals that are used as sacred sacrifices will be born into creatures that are better or more useful than before.*

**Keywords:** Education, Character, Religious, Mepepada Ceremony

## I. INTRODUCTION

The *mepepada* ceremony is a series of *Bhuta Yadnya* ceremonies as part of the *Panca Yadnya*. In Agastya Parwa's text, the *Panca Yadnya* is explained as follows:

“*Kunang ikang yadnya five pratekanya, lwirnya: Dewa yadnya, Rsi Yadnya, Pitra Yadnya, Butha yadnya, Manusa Yadnya. Nahan tang panca yadnya ring loka. Dewa yadnya ngaranya taila pwa karma ri bhattara siwagni, then the ring mandala ring Bhatara, yeka dewa yadnya ngaranya; Rsi Yadnya ngaranya kapujan sang pandita muwang sang wuh ri kalingan ing dadi wang; ya rsi yadnya ngaraniya: pitra yadnya ngaraninya tileman for hyang siwa sraddha, yeka pitra yadnya ngaranya; bhuta yadnya ngaranya Tawurmwang kapujam ing tuwuh pamunggan kunda wulan makadi walikrama, ekadasa dewata mandala; yeka bhuta yadnya ngaranya; aweh mangan ing kraman ya manusa yadnya ngaranya; ika ta limang wiji ring sedeng ni lokcara mangbhyasa ika maka bheda five*” (Agastya parwa, 35, b).

Translation:

'There are five types of *Yadnya*, namely *Dewa Yadnya, Rsi Yadnya, Pitra Yadnya, Bhuta Yadnya, Manusa Yadnya*. That is the *Panca Yadnya* in society. *Dewa Yadnya* is an offering of oil to Bhatara Siwagni, which is placed in Bhatara's place which is called *Dewa Yadnya*. *Rsi Yadnya* is a tribute to priests and people who know the nature of human birth. That is *Rsi Yadnya*. *Pitra Yadnya* is a death ceremony offered to Shiva as the ruler of death ceremonies. That's *Pitra Yadnya*. *Bhuta Yadnya* is *Tawur* and respect for *Sarwa Bhuta Pamungwan*, the place of fire worship, wulan, especially *walikrama (Panca Walikrama)*, the domain of the eleven gods (*Eka Dasa Rudra*). That is *Bhuta Yadnya*. *Manusa Yadnya* is giving food to the community. Those are the five types of ceremonies that people generally carry out, five types' (Wartayasa, 2018, p. 186).'

The *mepepada* ceremony includes the use of animals as sacrifices. The animal to be sacrificed must be purified first. The purification

of this animal is called *mepepada* which is part of the *Bhuta Yadnya* ceremony. *Mepepada* comes from the word "pada" in Balinese. In itself, it basically has two meanings, "same" and "foot". Pada can be interpreted as the equating of animal spirits which will be used for ceremonial purposes. By holding a *mepepada* ceremony, it is hoped that the spirit of the animal used for the ceremony will experience an increase in level or not become an animal again when it is reborn. *Mepepada* is carried out several days before the animal is slaughtered for the ceremony. Usually, this ceremony uses offerings (offerings) with various stages and is carried (finished) by a *sulinggih* (Hindu priest). *Mepepada* ceremonies are held in Bali and outside Bali, such as in Tangerang, but people do not yet understand that the *mepepada* ceremony is a process of purification, not killing animals. Therefore, it is important to research the *mepepada* ceremony to educate the religious character of the Tangerang people.

The *mepepada* ceremony can be used as a medium for cultivating religious character education. Education is an activity carried out deliberately to make people mature. The word adult comes from the word *devasya* (Sanskrit) which means someone has the qualities of a god. Someone who has deva qualities is called *daivi sampad* (N. N. Sudiani, 2020, p. 131). If someone already has deva qualities, they are said to be a person of character. Character is a complex set of psychological characteristics that spur a person to act as a messenger of moral messages (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004). This means that the person always acts according to religious teachings (Sudiani et al., 2021). Berkowitz further stated, "In terms of character education, the focus is all-encompassing and can be applied to all areas of life" (Althof & Berkowitz, 2013). This shows that character education is very important in life, both for living life and for improving spiritually. In the words of character, character consists of "understanding, caring, and attitudes based on core ethical values." This model shows the existence of cognitive, affective (motivation) and behavioral aspects (Althof & Berkowitz,

2013). Through the *Yajna Mepepada* ceremony, people are expected to not only understand its meaning but also be able to demonstrate religious character behavior. Instilling character education can be done by giving tasks, such as the task of carrying out the *mepepada* procession as carried out by Hindus at the Kertajaya Temple in Tanggerang (N. N. Sudiani et al., 2022). The intended cultivation of religious character education is that people believe in the teachings of *Panca Sraddha* and apply it in their daily lives. Religious is an attitude of accepting things beyond human logic, such as the greatness of the devatas (N. N. et al Sudiani, 2021). Furthermore, Durkheim stated that religion is anything that cannot be grasped by reason and cannot be understood by the five senses (Durkheim, 2011, p. 49). The *mepepada* ceremony is also full of religious value, because this ceremony is intended to improve the spiritual life of the animals that are sacrificed in their next birth. To develop the religious character of the people, namely the belief that animals used as sacrifices are not for killing but for purification and increasing the level of *atman* through the *mepepada* ceremony, it is important to carry out this research. The *mepepada* procession in Bali is generally carried out around the temple environment, namely outside the *tri mandala*. However, at Pura Agung Kertajaya Tanggerang, the *mepepada* procession is not carried out outside the *tri mandala*, but is only carried out around the *Padmasana*. This happens because the majority of non-Hindu people live in the area around the temple and the boundaries of the temple area are one with buildings belonging to other people. The interest in studying the *mepepada* ceremony was also motivated by research conducted by Asmarani entitled "*Animal Sacrifice in the Yadnya Ceremony: Killing or Glorifying?*" Asmarani's research results show that the use of animals as sacrifices in the *yajna* ceremony in Hinduism turns out to have a complex background. And the treatment of the mother who is used as a sacrifice cannot simply be called killing an animal because it contains values that are also believed to ennoble the animal itself. Asmarani's research is library research, while the research the researcher

conducted was field research. Asmarani's research has something in common, namely that they both found that the animal sacrificed was not a form of killing the animal but purifying the animal's *atman*. The difference lies in the researcher's aim, which is to instill character education in the people through the *mepepada* ceremony. Further research was carried out by I Nyoman Buda Asmara Putra and I Kadek Edi Palguna with the title "*Tawur Labuh Gentuh Ceremony in Mayura Park, Mataram City*". The aim of the research is to examine the form, function and meaning of the *Tawur Labuh Gentuh* Ceremony in Mayura Park, Mataram City. The similarity is that they both study the *Bhuta Yajna* ceremony. The difference is that Asmara Putra does not study the character education found in the *diletili* ceremony. Therefore, the novelty of the researcher's research is studying religious character education at the *mepepada* ceremony. Furthermore, research by I Dewa Made Rai Semara with the title "*Character Education Values Contained in Rituals Along with Independence Day at Pucak Temple, Pelapuan Village, Busungbiu District, Buleleng Regency*". The similarity is that they both study character education in rituals at Pura Pucak Desa. The difference is that it does not examine character education from the *mepepada* ceremony. Thus, the novelty of this research is examining religious character education at the *mepepada* ceremony, namely building religious belief in the people that the animal used as a sacrifice is not an act of murder as is the view of the people in Tanggerang who are anti-*himsa karma*. The aim of this research is to examine the cultivation of religious character education at the *mepepada* ceremony. According to researchers, this is very important to study, so that all people can instill religious character education in each of them. The aim from a scientific perspective is to increase understanding of the meaning of the *mepepada* ceremony, and the use of animals for rituals is justified by the Vedas.

## II. METHOD

This research is field research conducted at Kertajaya Taggerang Temple. This research

was conducted at the Kertajaya Temple in Tangerang. The researcher was interested in taking up this locus research because at that time the researcher discovered the implementation of the *mepepada* ceremony which was held in the framework of the 60th *pujawali* ceremony and the *numpuk pedagingan* ceremony. Data analysis was carried out using a qualitative approach, namely carrying out analysis without using statistical calculations. Data collection was carried out through interviews and observations. Data analysis used the Miles & Huberman model, namely reduction data, display data and conclusion drawing data/verification data regarding the religious character education.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Yajna ceremony in Hinduism is not only limited to religious activities, but religious activities contain many educational values. The basic framework of Hinduism consists of *tattwa*, morals and events, and these three are an inseparable unity. The implementation of the yajna ceremony is also inseparable from the integration of the three basic frameworks of Hinduism. The yajna ceremony is a way of implementing *tattwa* in everyday life. Svami Sivananda said that not every devotee is able to understand *tattwa*, therefore it is taught through mythology. If mythology is still considered difficult, it will be carried out through the yajna ceremony (S. Sivananda, 2003). The yajna ceremony has two functions, namely spiritual and non-spiritual. Spiritually, the yajna ceremony functions to increase the spirit of purity, purify the soul and free oneself from various attachments. Non-spiritually, it functions to instill discipline and human values. The *Yajna Mepepada* ceremony also has spiritual value, namely instilling religious character education in Hindus. Through cultivating religious character education, people can make a spiritual ascent. According to the source, the *mepepada* ceremony "is equalizing animal *atman* with other *atman* like human *atman*, meaning there is no difference". *Mepepada* also means purifying creatures or animals with legs to be offered to God during the *ngenteg linggih* or *tawur* ceremony."

"Before being slaughtered, the animal is first purified with a *purwa daksina* procession during the *mepepada* ceremony" (Suratnaya, Dewa, 2023). Furthermore, according to Mr. Nengah Dana, "The *Mepepada* ceremony is a ritual process of *Jiwatman* purifying sacrificial animals for offerings, not only four-legged animals, but also other animals that will be used as sacred sacrifices/offerings. This is related to the *mantra* uttered by *Pandita* when "*muput Karya*". This purification ritual is carried out with the aim of ensuring that the soul of the animal is not subject to the influence of *Rajas Tamas* so that it is willing and obedient to become a sacred offering. This is also closely related to *karma*, because only certain animals are chosen as sacred sacrifices (interview 15 September 2023).

The intended cultivation of religious character education is that people believe in the teachings of *Panca Sraddha* and apply it in their daily lives. Religious character education that can be instilled through the *Yajna Mepepada* ceremony includes:

#### 1. Believe in Brahman

Belief in Brahman is the initial and main belief that Hindus must have. Belief in God by Hindus is demonstrated by carrying out the yajna. The performance of yajna which is also called *yaaga* is intended to please *Paramaatman* and various *devatas* (Mishra et al., 2008, p. 190). That is why Hindus at Pura Kertajaya Tangerang carry out the *pujawali yajna* and pile up meat dishes to make the *devatas* and *Hyang Widhi* who live there feel happy. Hindus believe in the existence of Brahman in two concepts, namely *Nirgunam Brahman* and *Sagunam Brahman*. *Nirgunam Brahman* is a concept of God that the ordinary human mind cannot understand because He does not have a physical form. Only people who have a high spiritual level are able to understand His existence. Ordinary people are only able to understand Him in the concept of *Sagunam Brahman*, namely the concept of God who can be manifested in various forms of *devas* (N. N. Sudiani, 2023). In the book *Brhad Aranyaka Up. III.8.8* states, "He said: 'those who know Brahman call it eternal. He is

neither rough, nor smooth, neither short nor long, neither shining red (like fire) nor sticky (like water)..." (Radhakrishnan & Mantik, 2008). In the book of Isa Upanisad God is called transcendent and immanent (Easwaran, 2008, p. 58). Next in the book Svetasvatara Up. II.16 states, "He indeed, the Lord, who pervades all regions, was the first to be born and it is He who dwells in the womb of the universe. It is He, again, who is born as a child and He will be born in the future, He stands behind all persons and His face is everywhere (Sethumadhavan, 2011, p. 23). The statement in the book of Isa Upanisad shows that Brahman is understood as Sagunam Brahman.

The results of the interview with Dewa Suratnaya said, "When the *Yajna Mepepada* ceremony was taking place, Lord Siva in the form of Rare Anggon came down to the world to pick up the animal atman which was used as a holy sacrifice" (Suratnaya, 14 September 2023). Rare Anggon is a manifestation of Brahman, namely Lord Siva, and this is the concept of Sagunam Brahman. The presence of Deva Siva in the form of Rare Anggon also proves that God is present in every yajna implementation. The devas originate from Paramaatman as a result of the vibrations produced by the *mantra*. Devatas will appear during an offering involving the use of *mantras*. A wise person will see with his eyes directly (Mishra et al., 2008, p. 197). The tattoo of the embodiment of Deva Siva as Rare Anggon descending to earth is found in the book *Geguritan Sudamala*, where it is told that Deva Siva pretended to be sick, then sent Dewi Uma, his wife, to come down to the world to look for medicine. The medicine in question is cow's milk. Before getting milk from the cow, Goddess Uma cannot return to Siva Loka. Next, Deva Siva took the form of Rare Anggon to test Dewi Uma's loyalty (Sudiarga et al., 2000, p. 27). Through the *Yajna Mepepada* ceremony, it is believed that the belief in the existence of God in both Nirgunam Brahman and Sagunam Brahman can be realized in the people. The presence of God in the form of Rare Anggon to pick up the atman of animals fosters the religious

belief of the people that the animals used for *yadnya* are not killed but as a purification of the animal's soul.

## 2. Believe in Atman

The second Hindu belief is belief in the Atman. Atman is the individual soul, which is a reflection of Brahman (Wood, 2000). The Vedanta defines atman differently. Atman is God's servant, atman is God's spark, and atman is God himself (Maswinara, 2022). In the book *Jnana Yoga* VII.1,2,3,4,5,7,9,10,13 what is meant by atman is as follows (S. S. Sivananda, 1999):

1. There is an Atman or soul independent of body and mind. This soul is immortal, unchanging and infinite. Realise this Atman and be free.
2. This Atman is Satchidananda (Existence-Absolute, Consciousness-Absolute, Bliss-Absolute). It exists in the past, present and future. So it is Sat. It is pure or Absolute Consciousness without any thought. So it is Chit. It is absolute Bliss. So it is Ananda.
3. The unreal body perishes, but the Atman or the indweller is Immortal. So, you should not grieve when anyone dies. In essence everyone is Immortal Atman.
4. This Atman cannot be hurt by anyone. It is subtle, all-pervading. It is the Innermost Self of all.
5. This Atman is birthless, deathless, changeless. When the body is killed, He is not killed. Therefore grieve not, lament not, regret not. Be always cheerful.
6. This Atman is eternal, immovable, secondless, self-existent, self-centred. Therefore, knowing this to be such, thou shouldst not grieve, when your father, mother, son, wife or relative dies.

7. Brahman or Atman is beyond the reach of the mind and speech. He is beyond logic, reason, mental process, science. He must be realised through meditation.
8. You cannot deny or doubt your existence. You always feel that you exist. This existence is Atman or your own Self. The knower of the doubt or denier always exists. That knower is your own Atman.
9. Behold the one Immortal Atman in all names and forms. This alone is correct perception.

From these various slokas it can be concluded that atman is different from the body, atman is truth, the self of every being, is beyond the reach of the mind, and is eternal in all names and forms. This statement shows that all living creatures have atman, as do animals. Human origins from the womb, birth, growth and death are stated in the Lontar Tuter Rare Anggon, including the yajna ceremony carried out (Yunairi et al., 2019). However, living creatures are not only humans but also include plants and animals. Since in the womb, humans routinely perform rituals and make offerings to increase purity. Every living creature is believed to desire to make sacrifices, including animals. However, animals are not able to carry out the yajna by themselves, therefore they need human help. Humans are living creatures who are able to use their minds perfectly so that humans are able to carry out offerings. Humans are obliged to help other living creatures, in this case animals, so that animals can improve themselves. Animal life depends on natural laws. If animals want to experience an evolutionary leap, they must make sacrifices aimed at God. Humans help animals improve themselves by using them as sacred offerings or sacrifices, as is done by Hindus at Kertajaya Temple, Tangerang, in the context of *pujawali* and *numpuk pedagingan*.

Sacrifice or offering animals in Hinduism is not slaughter or committing himsa karma. Performing animal sacrifices is not against the teachings of the Vedas. The Yajurveda II.2.1 states, "the yajna is in the form of a black deer"

(Griffith, 2009, p. 18). Offering or sacrificing animals does not mean that Hindus slaughter or sacrifice solely the physical body of the animal. However, what is more important is that Hindus purify the atman of animals during the *mepepada* ceremony. According to Dewa Suratnaya, ""Before being slaughtered, the animal is first purified with a purwa daksina procession during the *mepepada* ceremony" (interview 14 September 2023). Furthermore, Nengah Dana said, "This purification ritual is carried out with the aim of ensuring that the animal's Soul is not attached to the influence of *Rajas Tamas* so that sincerity and obedience can be made into a sacred offering" (interview 11 September 2023). Animal Sacrifice is further mentioned in the Atharvaveda VII.5.5 which states, "The gods both offered a dog and parts of a cow; He who knows this sacrifice with the power of his mind-He may You proclaim that sacrifice for us here, may You grant it" (Taniputera, 2005, p. 8). The mantra shows that the Vedas encourage devotees to make offerings by sacrificing animals. Atharvaveda IX.5.19, the goat offered to Brahman, O Agni, you will know it then in the world filled with virtue, at the confluence of all paths (Taniputera, 2005, p. 324).

Hindus worship animals because animals for Hindus are close to devata, namely as devata's mounts. Everything that is valued by devatas is worshiped by humans. Respect for animals because all creatures created by God have a purpose. Apart from being seen spiritually, animals have also contributed a lot to human progress both physically and emotionally. Humans give affection to animals, and animals also reciprocate with affection and loyalty (Bhalla, 2015, p. 97). It is known from the book Manawa Dharmasastra V.42, it is stated that God created animals and plants for the purpose of sacrificial ceremonies, with the intention of benefiting the earth:

*"Eesvarthesu pacunhimsan veda,  
tattvarthavid dvijah,  
atmanam ca pacum caiva ga,  
mayatyutanam gatim"*

The translation

'A person who knows the true meaning of the Vedas, slaughtering an animal with the

above purposes causes himself and the animal to enter a very happy state' (Asmarani, 2020, p. 54)

The Manawa Dharmasastra V.40 explains that:

*"Osadyah pasavo vriksastir,  
yancah paksinastatha,  
yajnyartham nidhanam praptah,  
prapnu vantyutsritih punah"*

The translation

'Plants, bushes, trees, livestock, like other birds that have been used as means of ceremonial ceremonies will be born at a higher level in the next birth.' (Asmarani, 2020, p. 55).

Swami Sivananda in Bhagavata Purana VII.5.23 states that there are nine bhakti that should be carried out which are called Navavida Bhakti, namely:

*Sravanam kirtanam visnah  
Smaranam pada sevnam  
Archanam vandanam dasyam  
Sakhyam atmanivedanam.*

The highest level of devotional service is *atmanivedanam*, which is the sacrifice of the jiva. The animal used as a yajna can be called *atmanivedanam* because it sacrifices its life, namely giving up atman (S. S. Sivananda, 2005).

### 3. Believe in karmaphala

A ceremony is a prescribed formal or ceremonial procedure or custom in religious use or a solemn event. It could be called a common practice. Meanwhile, a ritual is a religious ceremony that involves a series of actions carried out in accordance with a series of rules. Hindu tradition aims to develop individuals who follow good habits, people who practice ceremonies and rituals that promote happiness. The purpose of human life is not limited to eating, drinking and having fun. The rishis and saints explained that material progress was secondary. The main goal of life is to gain knowledge and spiritual growth. To be able to achieve this, humans must strive to learn ceremonies and rituals that have been proven to pass the test of time. In the Vedas, Puranas and other literature, ceremonies and rituals are described as surrounding human life from

the time the baby is in the womb, is born, grows into an adult and finally dies. Through ceremonies and rituals, an individual is able to understand life better and is also able to overcome obstacles and obstacles. According to Meemansa Darshankar, "samskaras are the seeds of action. The beginning of the world depends on it." Each individual's behavior is influenced by the *samskaras* of previous lives, in addition to being influenced by the *samskaras* of the family in this life. Maharsi Charak said, "samskara aims to increase abilities and goodness in individuals and things. And through birth everyone is raw and stupid. Through *samskaras* one assumes a position of responsibility." Traditional ceremonies and rituals have a great influence on individuals. When carrying out the ritual it will involve *yajya*, chanting *mantras*, special offerings and groups of people participating which are based on scientific principles. Scientists recognize the influence of sound and music, color, magnetic vibrations and efforts to concentrate. There is no doubt about the influence of ceremonies and rituals (Bhalla, 2015, pp. 107–110).

Carrying out the yajna by offering animal sacrifices is not an act of *himsa*. Vedavyasa says that animal sacrifice is not sinful because the act is infused with the sound of the Veda. Manu also said that performing *asvamedha* (horse offering) is better than a thousand other offerings. The Chandogya Upanisad states that *ahimsa* must be practiced except for Vedic ceremonies. Considerations of violence and war are not placed in the offerings. There are three types of sacrificial ceremonies, namely *pakayajna*, *haviryajna*, and *somayajna*. The sixth and subsequent *haviryajna* is called *niruudhapasubandha* or animal sacrifice (Mishra et al., 2008, p. 206). This statement shows that Hindus are not blamed for performing *yajna* by offering animals. The book Atharvaveda IX.4.1 states, "a light-skinned bull with a thousand times the value, a cow that produces abundant milk, in its belly contains all the manifestations of

existence (the universe), the desires of the person who offers it, namely the person who is the performer of this offering, the person who was Brhaspati's favorite had carried out a sacrificial ceremony" (Taniputera, 2005, p. 308). Atharvaveda Book IX.4.3, "Cows rich in milk, he was sacrificed to Indra, may Agni take him along the paths usually trodden by the gods. Furthermore, Atharvaveda IX.5.1, "May the goat be able to reach the third heaven." Mantra IX.5.3, "From all the steps you tread you erase all evil; with hoofs that have been cleaned, let him step forward, crossing the darkness, looking into all the vast corners, hopefully this goat can reach the third heaven. Mantra IX.5.4, "Cut the skin with dark metal, O officer who slaughters it, cut the joints with a knife; handle cutting joints well; take this goat to the third heaven" (Taniputera, 2005, p. 318). These mantras imply that animals that are used as holy sacrifices will reach the third heaven, namely heaven. When slaughtering, be very careful. Next IX.5.7, "This goat was offered in this world by someone who had faith to dispel darkness." The meaning of this mantra is that the animal sacrificed can dispel darkness. Atharvaveda Book IX.5.27, "if there is a woman who has separated from her previous husband, and then remarries, if this couple offers a goat with five plates of rice, then the two of them will not be separated again" (Taniputera, 2005, p. 320 ). These various *mantras* can be concluded that the *karma* carried out by animals that are used as holy sacrifices is not in vain. That *karma* causes darkness to disappear and animals can gain heaven. In the book of Siva Purana In sloka 39 it states, "offerings are the greatest ritual. Results were achieved by holy sacrifice. Those who engage in repentance continually rejoice along with the devas (Wijaya, 2015, p. 432).

In the book of Sarasamuccaya 2 it is stated, "*Ri sakwehning sarwa bhuta, iking janma wwang also author gumawayaken ikang subhaasubhakarma, kuneng panentasakena ring subhakarma also ikangasubhakarma phalaning dadi wwang*, if translated then, 'among all living creatures, only those who

are born as humans, are can carry out good or bad deeds, dissolve bad deeds into good deeds, that is the benefit (reward) of being human" (Kajeng, 2003). The meaning of this sloka is that only humans can help themselves whether they will remain human, rise to become heavenly beings or even descend into lower beings. The book Sarasamuccaya 4, states "*apan iking dadi wwang, utama also yes, nimittaning mankana, nah ya tumulung crew sangkeng sangsaara, makasādhanang śubhakarma, hinganing kottamaning dadi wwang ika*, the translation 'to become a human being is really the main thing, that's why it's so because it can help himself from a miserable situation (repeated birth and death) by doing good, that is the virtue of becoming a human being'" (Kajeng, 2003, p. 9). Because only humans are capable of doing good deeds, humans are the ones who can help animals so that in the future they can be born into more useful creatures by making holy sacrifices.

Both rishis and ascetics, thinkers and intelligent ordinary people have stated that human life is the most precious gift bestowed by God. One can attain human form after passing through 84 lakh births. There are 30 lakh births in the life of Animals, 27 lakhs in the world of insects, 14 lakhs as birds, 9 lakhs as fish and 4 lakhs as other Animals. The literature mentions how difficult it is to obtain the gift of human form. The book Canakya Niti 14.3 mentions the privileges and difficulties of obtaining human form, as follows (Bhalla, 2015, p. 102):

"If you lose wealth, you can get it back. Friends who are angry or distant can come back to you. New friends can be made. If a wife leaves or dies, a person can remarry. Property can be obtained again. but one cannot assume human form again." Sri Ram further explained the significance of the human form by saying:

"It is a great fortune to obtain the form of a human. "All the holy books confirm that human form is very



difficult to obtain, even for the Gods." "The human form is a stepping stone to hell, heaven or eternal liberation. Through it one can gain knowledge, detachment and devotional service." "The human body is a vessel in the vast ocean of life. My blessings are like a gentle breeze that pushes the ship'. (Bhalla, 2015, pp. 101–103).

During the ceremonial procession, the congregation chants the mantra 'Om Namah Sivaya'. This mantra or prayer is believed to be able to deliver the atman of the animals used as yajna to reach heaven. Prayer will elevate the individual to unparalleled greatness. The sacred literature mentions that many devotees attained liberation through devotional service to the Lord. In the Vedas, Puranas and other sacred literature, the meaning of repeated prayers to God is highly recommended. People who obediently remember and make offerings will be transformed from simple people into people with the attributes of the Gods inherent in them. In Yogadarshan 2.44, Patanjali says, "by offering prayer, one can come face to face with God" (Bhalla, 2015, p. 300). Ramcharitmana in the book Aranyakanda 35.1 says, "A mantra is an intermediary that can awaken the sleeping consciousness in an individual. The latent powers are activated and made effective." Every *mantra* has power. The Gods and Goddesses are captivated by the mantra and will bestow boons (Bhalla, 2015, p. 304).

#### 4. Believe in punarbhawa

Punarbhawa is rebirth with the aim of improving oneself. If someone does good in this life, then after death and rebirth it is believed that they will be born from heaven and become a more useful person. Atharvaveda IX.5.9, "Ascend, O goat, to a world filled with virtue; you move across places where it is difficult for sarabha (grasshoppers) to pass..." (Taniputera, 2005, p. 321). Atharvaveda Book IX.5.16, "O goat, you go to the heavenly world; because of you, the Angirasas knew their world first; that pure world I had joyfully known before." Atharvaveda IX.5.18, this cooked goat,

together with five plates of rice, dispels destruction, takes one to the heavenly realm; with it we conquer the planets which (each) has its sun" (324). Good deeds performed by animals through being made offerings, cause them to be able to reach the heavenly realm and will be born from heaven as well. The aim of animal sacrifice is to obtain the happiness of living happily in the heavenly world (Mishra et al., 2008, p. 194). Atharvaveda IX.5.5, "accompanied by the recitation of a sloka I put the kettle on the fire;...O you sacrificial goat; when you are ripe, may you go to a world filled with virtue (Taniputera, 2005, p. 319).

Every animal that is used as a holy sacrifice will not be in vain and will definitely get the result, namely being born into a more useful creature. It can be said to be like humans feeding cows with grass, and cows respond by producing milk for humans. To obtain rain, humans must make offerings to heavenly beings. In the book of the Bhagavadgita III.11 it states, "*devān bhāvayatānena te devā bhāvayantu vaḥ, parasparam bhāvayantaḥ śhreyah param avāpsyatha*", that is, if humans care for the devatas by making offerings, then the devas will give their grace, namely supreme happiness" (Researcher and Translation Team, 2021). Thus, there is no doubt that the animals that are sacrificed will have a better life. Mishra said that nowadays many animals are slaughtered in laboratories as guinea pigs. Animal sacrifice should be considered as a slight injury to the cause of a great ideal of human well-being. In fact, there is no injury because the sacrificed animal attains a higher state. Of the Vedic ceremonies, sacrifice occupies the highest place (Mishra et al., 2008, pp. 208–211). In the Ramāyana, Putrakaamesti is performed, namely sacrifice to obtain sons (Mishra et al., 2008, p. 675). Because the yajna was performed sincerely, King Dasharatha had four sons. The theory of cause and effect states that if there is a cause, there will be an effect. Likewise with the karmaphala theory, if someone does good things it will have good consequences. This also happens to

animals that are used as yajnas. Based on interviews with sources, Mr. Dewa Suratnaya said, "There is an experience that because they are made sacrifices, animals experience improvement when they are reborn. Turkey sacrifices during Vesak become birds, but not yet humans. There are also experiences from horses becoming humans, dogs being born humans and large monkeys becoming humans" (14 September 2023).

In the book of *Sarasamuccaya* 7 it is stated, "*Apan iking janma mangke, pagawayan śubhāśubha-karma too yes, ikang ri pēna pabhuktyan karma-phala ika, kalingganya, ikang śubhāśubha-karma mangke ri pēna ika an kabangun phalanya, ri pēgatni kabhuktyanya, mangjanma ta ya muwah, tūmūta wāsanāning karma-phala, wāsanā ngaraning sangkāra, turahning ambemātra, ya tinūtning paribhāsā, swargācyuta, narakācyuta, firefly fish śubhāśubha-karma ri pēna, tan paphala ika, maturenyan mangke also pē ngpōnga śubhāśubha-karma.* Translation: Because birth as a human now is an opportunity to do good or bad work, the results of which will be enjoyed in the afterlife; meaning, good or bad work now, in the afterlife the results will actually be tasted; after finishing enjoying it; the taste buds drip again; then the traces of the results of his actions follow; wasana is called sangskara, a small remnant of the smell of something that is still only traces of it, which is followed by (peng) punishment, namely falling from the levels of heaven or from the crater of hell; As for good or bad deeds done in the afterlife, it doesn't have any consequences, because what really matters is the good or bad deeds done right now. Furthermore, the book *Sarasamuccaya* 27 states, "*kunang ikang wwang gumawayikang śubhakarma, janmanyān sangkē rig swarga dēlāha, litu hayu maguṇa, sujanma, sugih, mawīrya, phalaning śubhakarmāwasāna tinēmunya*". The translation is 'for people who do good deeds, one day they will be born from heaven, born to be beautiful, wise, noble, rich and have power. That is what he gets as a result of doing good deeds' (Kajeng, 2003).

In the book of *Bhagavadgita* 8.5 it states,

"Whoever remembers Me when death approaches, will come to Me. There is no doubt about this." Furthermore, 8.6 states, "Whatever the last thought of an ordinary person, a rsi, an animal, a bird, a plant, or any living creature, when the soul leaves the body, that thought will accompany it in the next life (Pudja, 2005).

## 5. Believe in moksha

The book *Canakya Niti* 14.3 states "The human body is a means of bringing a person to the gate of liberation. If the person cannot seize the opportunity to attain a higher self, it can only be considered a misfortune" (Bhalla, 2015, pp. 101–103). The human body is not only for worldly enjoyment, but more importantly for liberation. *Moksha* is liberation from the cycle of birth and death, achieved by realizing the unity of Atman and Brahman. The word *moksha* is from the word *moha* and *ksa* which is 'free, unbound, independent (*ksa*)' from *moha*, 'greed, attachment, desire, madness.' It was further explained that *moksha* means human self-awareness with God, so that the characteristics arise: joy without a guardian of sorrow, "joy that never returns to sorrow, or *amor ring acintya*, and in Java it is called "*manunggaling kawula lan Gusti*", all of which have the meaning of melting down. atman in union with God. According to Hindu teachings, *moksha* can be divided into two types, namely: 1) *Moksha* while alive; 2) *Moksha* after death. *Moksha* during life is often called the soul of *mukti*. A person is said to have achieved *jiva mukti* if he is able to free himself from various worldly attachments. *Moksha* after death is the union of Atman consciousness with Brahman consciousness or it can be said to be the union of Atman with Paramaatman.

*Moksha* in terms of the presence of the body or corpse is differentiated as follows: 1) *Moksha* which still leaves the gross body; 2) *Moksha*, who when he dies, leaves no trace of his gross body. Even in life after death, *moksha* can be divided into four spiritual levels as follows: 1) *Salokya*, is the spiritual level of devotees who have the opportunity to be in the same area as God, for example

both living in Siva Loka, 2) *Samipyra*, is the spiritual level of devotees who get the gift of being close to God. This situation can be likened to a servant (bhakta) with his master (God), 3) *Sarupya*, is the level of a devotee with God who already has similarities, 4) *Sayujya* or *ekanta mukti*, is a devotee who has become one, one with God. This situation has reached “*Amor ring Acintya, or manunggaling kawula lan Gusti*. Atman consciousness has merged to become one with Brahman. There are other levels of *mokhsa*, if viewed from another perspective. The levels of *moksha* referred to are: 1) *Moksha*, is the level of the single consciousness of the individual Jiva with the Universal Jiva. Someone like this, he doesn't know the day and date of death yet. He was still in corpse form; 2) *Adimoksa*, is when someone knows the day and date of death, but if they die they still leave behind a corpse; 3) *Paramamoksa*, this level is when someone knows the day and date of death and if they die, their body will leave no trace (Saraswati & Paramita, 2016, p. 39). In this study, because the animal's body was still there and was slaughtered by the people, it had not yet reached *moksha*.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The *mepepada* ceremony is a series of *Bhuta Yadnya* ceremonies, namely to purify the atman of the animal that is used as *caru*. The *mepepada* ceremony procession at Pura Agung Kertajaya Tanggerang is different from that held in Bali. During the *mepepada* procession it is not carried out around the temple area or outside the *tri mandala*, but only around the *padmasana*. This was done to respect non-Hindu people who live in the area around the temple. There is also no area to surround the temple because the temple area is attached to buildings owned by other people. The *mepepada* ceremony can be used as a medium for religious character education for Hindus in Tanggerang, because of the growing belief of the people that the *mecaru* ceremony is not an act of killing an animal, but on the contrary is a purification of the animal's atman. Lord Shiva in the form of Rare Anggon came down to the world to pick up the atman of the

animals that were used as *yadnya*, convincing people of the manifestation of God as Sagunam Brahman to deliver the atman of animals to heaven.

Through the *mepepada* ceremony, people are taught that animal atman and human atman are the same. All creatures have atman to give life to the body. There are differences in the material that confines the atman depending on each individual's actions. Animals that are used as *yajna* or holy sacrifices are believed to increase in rank and become more useful creatures. Every creature is believed to carry out karma. If the actions are good then the results will be good. On the other hand, if the action is bad, the results obtained will be bad. Humans are able to help themselves by doing good. However, animals and plants depend on natural laws. So that animals and plants can evolve outside the laws of nature, humans have an obligation to help them. One way that can be done to help is by making animals as sacred offerings or sacrifices. The people have the belief that through the *mepepada* ceremony the people do not commit murder but instead do good deeds, namely purifying and improving the standard of life of animals when they are reborn.

To obtain a human body requires repeated births. Humans cannot become *moksa* in just one birth. Animals are unable to help themselves, therefore need human help. Every creature is believed to want to perform *yajna*, to improve spiritually or spiritually. However, animals must be helped by humans. The *mepepada* ceremony makes people have a religious character, that is, it causes the people to believe that if an animal is used as a holy sacrifice, then through the *mepepada* ceremony the animal's atman is purified. It is believed that the Atman of an animal that has been purified will become a more useful being if it is reborn. Suffering in the world will disappear when all attachments disappear and you will achieve eternal happiness called *moksha*. The *mepepada* ceremony makes people realize that even animals can achieve *moksha*, if at every birth they are used as a means of offering. The animal that is used as a *yadnya*, the animal's atman will be purified first.

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