

Review of Ancient Indian Literature in Relation to Preconception

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Abstract: Ancient Indian literature has described the process of formation of a human individual in great detail. This is not only a biological process but also a bio-psycho-spiritual process. It has been equated with the process of formation of the universe which evolves from interplay of *Purusha* (supreme soul or God or the consciousness) and *Prakriti* (un-manifest primal nature). Purusha at his free will gets mixed up with un-manifest primal nature, giving rise to the knowable empirical universe. The human body also evolves when the *Jiva* (soul) accompanies the *Manas* (mind) and the four subtle elements and enters the conglomerated entity formed by mixing of the ovum and sperm. Hence, preconception care has also been described at three levels: biological or physical level, psychological level, and at the level of consciousness. For assembling the information, the commentaries written by knowledgeable scholars who wrote them after studying the ancient literature have been consulted. The study gave rise to the understanding that, according to ancient Indian literature, human individuals should be conceived with full awareness of the motive of bringing a new life into existence and accordingly values and qualities it should have. To achieve the above goal, preconception care or *Garbhadhan Vidhi* has been described.

Keywords: ancient Indian literature, preconception, bio-psycho-spiritual process

If one wants to know about anything, one invariably needs to inquire into and understand the course and processes of its formation. In the case of human beings, the process through which we are made will obviously effect our future potential and indeed our entire life. How we come to be is of supreme significance since the quality of human life depends on this process.

The ideal method of creating a human being has been described in *Ayurveda* and other Vedic literature (i.e., ancient Hindu literature). Its complete procedure was developed by accomplished sages (*Rishis*) based on teachings from their teachers (*Gurus*) to whom the pure knowledge was revealed through *Daksh Prajapati*. Ultimately, this knowledge was received from the all knowledgeable creator of this universe, *Brahma*. The

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sages incorporated experiences of their Guru's and their own knowledges to develop the direction for a common man for conceiving a new individual. (Vaidya, 1969). Directions on all the aspects of life (which also includes pregnancy) have been given. The entire process of creating an individual has been named "*Garbhasanskar*." It has two phases: The first is the preparation for and the method of impregnation called "*Garbhadhan Vidhi*" (pre-conception care) followed by care and guidelines for the pregnant woman called "*Garbhini Pricharya*" (ante-natal care). Though these customs were practiced throughout India. Their prevalence in north India has decreased to the extent that present generations are not even aware of the rituals, which were routinely practice three generations back. These changes happened slowly after invasion of Muslim rulers followed by British Colonial rule. In south India, these customs are still advised and practiced by people who want to conceive consciously. Some of the Ayurvedic institutions are also reviving the preparatory pre-conception process for conceiving a baby in northern India.

Preconception is the time of preparing to conceive a baby. It is the time when core inputs, sperm of the male and ovum of female are developing and maturing. This is when we invite a new individual to our lives. At this stage, the parental state of being physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual states is reflected in quality of *shukra dhatu*. This then attracts similar types of consciousness to their womb. Depending on this, one out of millions of options is selected as a new individual in the womb at the time of formation of, the zygote. So, preconception planning and preparation gives couples a chance to work on their own patterns of consciousness and invite an individual of their own choice into their life.

The new consciousness takes up and adjusts itself to the existing pattern of the parental energy around the time of conception. With these inputs and with its own past *sanskaras*, it starts forming its formative base (individuality) for life. Greater efforts are required to culture the fetus once it starts developing its individuality in a particular manner. That is why preconception period is considered even more important than prenatal period.

Now let us explore the ancient foundations of preconception planning, beginning with a much broader view of the universe.

Evolution

The process of evolution of this universe has been described in the ancient literature. The universe evolves because of interplay of *Purusha* and *Prakriti*. The human body evolves in the same way the universe evolved (Vaidya, 1969; Shashtri, 2014; Goswami, 2017).

Purusha

Purusha is the supreme soul or the soul of the universe or the consciousness. It has no beginning, is devoid of attributes, exists beyond *Prakriti*, is revealed in hearts of all beings and is self-effulgent. Pervaded by Purusha, the universe presents itself to our view (Goswami, 2017).

Prakriti

Prakriti, the primal nature or *avyakta* (that which cannot be perceived with senses) is the chief component (*pradhana*) of the creation. It is responsible for the creation, is not an end product of anything and is an eternal energy (Goswami, 2017). It is un-manifest, non-apprehensive, minute, formless, undifferentiated, unlimited, ubiquitous, indestructible, un-delaying, and without a beginning or an end.

Avyakta (Prakriti), like an ocean, is an abode of a variety of subtle energy quanta which are responsible for creation. Its seven end products include *Mahat* (intellect), *Ahankara* (ego) and the five *Tanmatras*. Matter and energy are impermanent, ever-changing and are flickering in and out of existence.

The table below shows the different properties of Purusha and Prakriti (Usha, 2007).

| PURUSHA | | PRAKRITI | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| <i>Chetana</i> | Sentient | <i>Achetana</i> | Insentient |
| <i>Aguna</i> | Not having <i>tri-gunas</i> | <i>Triguna</i> | Having <i>tri-gunas</i> |
| <i>Abeejadharmā</i> | Not having seeds | <i>Beeja-dharmīni</i> | Having the beejas (seed) of creation |
| <i>Aprasavadharmā</i> | Not having evolutionary nature | <i>Prasava-dharmīni</i> | Having the evolutionary functions |
| <i>Madhyastha Dharmā</i> | Devoid of happiness or Misery | <i>Madhyastha dharmīni</i> | Having the sensation of happiness and misery |

The Evolution of the Universe

All pervading *Purusha* accepted at his own free will the un-manifest, divine *Prakriti*, that sought him in her playful mood. Primordial matter

(*Prakriti*), which is in the quiescent state, is disturbed by catalytic impact of supreme consciousness (*Purusha*) leading to chaotic vibration of patterns and production of *trigunas* (three qualities): *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. When with *Prakriti*, *Purusha* fell prey to its charm, which obscured the knowledge, he forgot himself the moment he saw her evolving through her *gunas* (*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*). The *Purusha* started identifying himself with *Prakriti* and got mixed up with it and in a way, disappeared into the *Prakriti*, then appeared as atoms and molecules, various life forms, different planets, stars, solar systems, milky ways; created mountains, rivers, streams, and flowers; created animals, birds, and human beings having feelings and emotions. In this blissful journey, the *Purusha* was accompanied by pure love. (Goswami, 2017).

Prakriti (*pradhana* or chief component) which consists of three *gunas* (*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*) is un-manifest. Primordial matter exists both as cause and effect of the universe, which though undifferentiated (in its causal state) is the source of distinct subtle energy quanta in the process of evolution of matter. By this the un-manifested, inconceivable *Prakriti* evolves as knowable, empirical universe.

Avyakta, like an ocean, is an abode of variety of *evolvents* which are responsible for the creation. The seven *evolvents* include *Mahat* (intellect), *ahankara* (ego) and the five *Tanmatras*. As the matter state of consciousness, the *Mahat* or *Buddhi* (intellect) is the first one to evolve. (Usha, 2007)

Mahat

The intellect (*Mahat*), the first to evolve from the primordial matter, is meant for conceptual thinking, comprehension reasoning, learning, and memory. This *Mahat* is also *trigunaatmaka* (contains three qualities). From this arises *ahankara* (ego) (Vaidya, 1969; Shashtri, 2014).

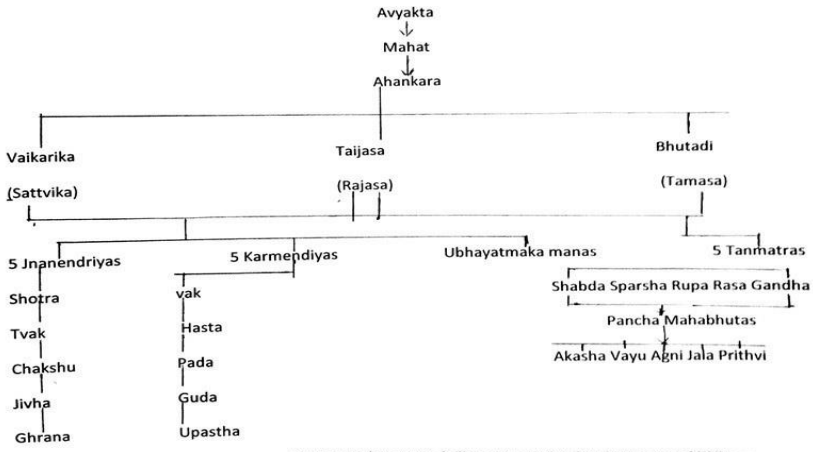
Ahankara

There are three *ahankaras*: *Sattva ahankara* (*Vaikarika*), *Rajasa ahankara* (*Taijasa*), and *Tamas ahankara* (*Bhutadi*). The *Sattva ahankara* with the aid of *Rajasa ahankara* by further differentiation and integration, form the *ekadasha indriyas* (eleven senses), i.e. *pancha Jnanendriyas* (five knowledge senses), *pancha Karmendriyas* (five functional organs) and *Manas* (mind). *Bhutadi*, the *Tamasika ahankara* integrated with *Rajasika ahankara*, form the *pancha Tanmatra* (five *Tanmatra*) that represents absolutely homogeneous, ubiquitous, and infinitesimal units of mass carrying quanta of energy. The five *Tanmatras* are: *Shabda Tanmatra* (the principle of sound), *Sparsh Tanmatra* (the principle of touch), *Roop Tanmatra* (the principle of color), *Rasa Tanmatra*

(the principle of taste), and *Gandh Tanmatra* (the principle of smell) (Shashtri, 2014).

Tanmatras

The *Tanmatras* are described as subtle concrete substances possessing physical characters that become actualized and convert into various atomic constituents of the gross matter, the *pancha Mahabhutas* (five elements). The five *mahabhutas* are space, air, fire, water, and earth. *Tanmatras* represent quanta of energy that have attributes like penetrability, impact, radiation including heat, viscosity, and cohesiveness. Apart from these physical characters, *Tanmatras* also possess the potentials of energy represented by sound, touch, color, taste, and smell. For example, the potentials of *Shabda* (sound) are charged with the energy of vibration. The potentials of *Sparsha* (touch) are lodged in another group of *Tanmatras*, which carry the physical energy of impact and pressure exertion (Goswami, 2017).



The Evolution of Human Body

The process of evolution inside the human body (the biological evolution) is the same as what happens in the universe (the cosmic evolution). Evolution observed at the biological level is merely an extension of the universal process. As described earlier, all-pervading *Purusha* accepted the un-manifest divine *Prakriti* and then fell prey to its charm, which obscured his knowledge. He forgot himself (as a divine being) and started identifying himself with *Prakiriti* and the action being performed by the *gunas* of *Prakriti* (Joshi, 2009). He started attributing

them to himself. This feeling of doer-ship binds him to the actions, although he is a mere witness and therefore a non-doer. In reality, he is independent. This bondage of being a doer makes him helpless to have pleasurable or painful experience. This subjects him to repeated birth and death even though he is blissful by nature.

- Matter stuff of consciousness (intellect) becomes individuated and is known as ahankara (ego) (Joshi, 2009).
- Ahankara or cosmic ego - the feeling of I am the universal soul identifies self with mind and intellect (Tiwari, 2014).
- With the companionship of *Mana*, the *Atama* proceeds for taking hold of *gunas* (*Satwa, rajat, tamas*) and at this time only it first of all create *akasha*. This happens in the same way as after complete annihilation of entire universe god of creation *Brahma* first of all created *akasha* (with the assistance of *satwa* followed by gradual creation more perceptible *bhutas* and *vayu* etc.) (Vaidya, 1969).
- Bifurcation of the indeterminate stuff into subject series and object series involves the manifestation of ego or *ahankara* which trifurcates itself into three kinds of *ahankaras*: *Sattvika, Rajasika, and Tamasika ahankaras*.
- *Sattva* is a medium for the reflection of intelligence, *Rajas* is the energy in motion characterized by a tendency to work, and *Tamas* is the mass or inertia which ensures stability and resistance, whose combinations and interactions leads to further creation.

The *Sattvika ahankara*, with the aid of *Rajasika ahankara*, by further differentiation and integration, converts into the subject series which at subsequent state of evolution gets differentiated into the sensory and motor stuff: *ekadasha indriyas* i.e., *pancha Jnanendriyas, pancha Karmendriyas, and Manas*. *Tamasika ahankara* or *Bhutadi* represents homogeneous, ubiquitous, and infinitesimal units of mass. *Rajasika ahankara*, when charges the *Tamas*, leads to the formation of original units of mass carrying quanta of energy (*pancha Tanmatra*), which further evolves in to *pancha Mahabhutas* (Objective series). Thus, both the body and intelligentsia of human body are produced from the three patterns (*gunas*) (Vaidya, 1969; Shashtri, 2014; Usha, 2007).

Formation of Human Body

When a man with unvitiated *shukra* (sperm) cohabits with a woman having un-afflicted *artava* (ovum), *garbhashaya* (uterus), and *yoni* (female genital tract) in *ritukala* (period of fertilization), the *Jiva* (the Soul) associated with *Manas* (mind) descends into mass formed (zygote) producing the *garbha* (embryo) (Usha, 2007).

This *Garbha* is managed with proper regimen and is nourished by wholesome *Rasa* (Congenial Diet). The *Garbha* grows normally and gets delivered at appropriate time. It is endowed with complete body part all the *Indriyas* (sensory and motor organ), *bala* (energy), *sattva* (endurance), *samhana* (compactness of tissues) and *Sara* (excellence of *dhatu*). This is achieved by the cumulative work of *matrja* (maternal), *pitrja* (paternal), *atmaja* (soul), *sattvaj* (mind), *satmiyaja* (diet) and *rasaja bhawas* (physical and psychological components) (Usha, 2007).

It has constant association of *manas*. *Atma* or *Jiva* despite being imperishable, eternal, and unconceivable, due to effect of *daiva* (destiny) associated with *bhuta* (*pancha mahabhutas*), *satwa*, *raja*, *tamas*, *daiva*, and *asura* etc., *bhavas*, and impelled by *vayu* reaches the uterus and stays there. As the rays emanating from sun or fire being emitted from quartz (*sphatikamani*) and reaching wood are not actually seen, but are accepted because of their results, i.e. heat of the sun and fire in the wood, similarly entry of *atma* with *sattva* in the uterus is not seen (but is accepted due to its effect) (Tiwari, 2014). Even though the broad division of components comprises of *pancha mahabhutas* and *atma* (*shadbhavas*), the intricate composition contains 24 factors presided by *atma* (the only one conscious entity).

All the substances in the world are made of the five primary elements (*pancha mahabhutas*) namely earth, water, fire, air, and ether. *Garbha* is made up of these five elements associated with *atma*. The material body consists of five gross elements (*pancha mahabhutas*) whose various modes of combination leads to biological products, different tissues and tissue systems. The sources of *pancha mahabhutas* are mother's ovum, father's spermatozoon, *atma* of the embryo and *ahara rasa* (nutrients from blood). Whatever is eaten gets digested and is converted to *rasa* and in continuation is converted to *rakta* (blood). *Rakata* converts to *mamsa* (flesh), *mamsa* to *medas* (fat), *meda* to *snayu* (ligament), *snayu* to *asthi* (bone), *asthi* to *majja* (marrow), *majja* is converted to *shukra* (both for male and female) (Das, 2014).



The 24 principles including *Prakriti* have the qualities of *Sattva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas* because the resultant is according to cause.

Prakriti Includes *avyakta* (1), *mahat* (1), *ahankara* (1), *pancha Tanmatra* (5)

Vikriti Includes *pancha mahabhutas* (5) and *ekadasha indriyas* (11)

Purusha the ultimate consciousness (1)

Inclusion of all these factors makes the human body a multi-strata biophysical mass with innate consciousness. In this context, apart from matter characterized by cellular and biological mass, the ancient literature explains another dimension, which deals with the ultimate factors of the universe.

Thus, the definition of *garbha* (fetus) in Ayurveda stands for conglomerated entity of male and female pronuclei (*shukra* and *shonita*: sperm and ovum), Soul (*atma*), eight constituents of primordial matter (*Prakriti*) and its end products (*Vikriti*).

Human beings perceive of the objects of *indriyas* by the specific *indriya* only because the origin of both is similar. The instruments of knowledge are mind and intellect. Two separate years to perceive spoken words *Twacha* (skin), for touch perception *Chakshu*, (for visual perception), *Jihwa* (tongue for taste perception, *nasika* (nose) for perception of smell, *upastha* (genitals) for sexual pleasure, *apana* (guda) for excretion or voiding. With *mana* one perceives, with *budhi* one reasons out and decides (after proper psychological perception), then one comments with speech (Das, 2014). The following table lists all of them.

Janendriya Perception
Shrotra (ear) *Shabda* (hearing)
Twak (skin) *parshana* (touch)

Chakshu (eye) *Rupa* (vision)
Jihwa (tongue) *Rasa* (taste)
Ghrana (nose) *Gandha* (smell)

Karmendriya Perception
Vak (mouth) *Vacana* (speech)
Pada (feet) *Viharana* (walk)
Pani (hand) *Dana* (work)
Payu (anus) *Visarga* (removal of waste)
Upastha (genitals) *Ananda* (enjoyment)

Preconception Care

Garbhadan vidhi or preconception care starts right before the couple gets married. The following parameters should be considered to get a good progeny (Tiwari, 2014).

The male should be:

- 25 years of age,
- born to parents who are of different lineage,
- born to parents who are not suffering from any sexually transmitted disease.

The female should be:

- 16 years of age,
- beautiful, modest,
- has complete body parts (not excessive),
- is delicate, good natured,
- does not bear the name of goddesses, snakes, planets, mountains, rivers, or any frightening name.

Marriage is intended for creation only. So, the intention of creation is put at the time of marriage in the form of a ritual called “*Garbhasanskaar*” which is performed right at the time of marriage. There is no place for accidental pregnancy in Vedic literature and Ayurveda. A crop is grown with an intention of getting good yield (Shashtri, 2014; Tambe, 2014). Intentions behind bringing the child to this world are very important. Ayurveda had the following guidelines for preparing for conception. The unborn child carries some destined programs as per its past actions (*karma*) (Hindu literature believes in rebirth and considers the soul as eternal which works through body), but it receives physical nourishment from the mother and its mind is still attached to her mind. The mother’s

behavior, diet, thoughts, speech, and action have a profound impact on the fetus (Vaidya, 1969).

Pre-conception care in Ayurveda has been prescribed on three planes (Usha, 2007):

- (i) Care in the physical plane maintains the state of equilibrium in *doshas* and *dhatu*s (physical entities), and are hence necessary for promoting physical traits like *Prakriti* (nature), *sara*, *samhanana*, *pramana*, etc.
- (ii) Care in psychological plane maintains the static equilibrium of *Manogunas* (*trigunas*: *Sattvik*, *Rajsik*, *Tamsik*) and pacifies the *Sattva* (psyche) thus promoting the psychological qualities like intelligence (*dhi*, *dhriti*, *smriti*).
- (iii) Care in the plane of consciousness: Soul is the silent onlooker in Ayurvedic embryology; a series of *yagnya*, *hawans*, *homas* have been advocated to invoke the soul of higher origin.

Care in Physical Plane

The eligible wife and husband should undertake celibacy (*brahamcharya*), i.e. physical, verbal, and psychological, and sexual abstinence for a month. After this, the first step towards successful conception is purification of the body. In Ayurveda, the cleansing is based on purification of the five elements that make up the body: space/ether (*aakasha*), air (*vayu*), fire (*agni*), water (*jala*), and earth (*prithvi*).

Shodhana therapy. Combination of the space element and air element together form *vata dosha*. Its cleaning can be achieved by administering enema (*Basti*). The fire, air, and water element form *pitta dosha*, which is removed through *Videhan*. *Kapha dosha*, made up of water and earth, element is balanced by *Vaman* (emesis).

Oleation and Sudation prior to Shodhana therapy. Oleation and sudation loosen the *doshas* and bring the vitiated *doshas* which are anointed by oleation back to *Koshtha* (digestive tract). From here they can be eliminated by means of elimination therapy like *Vaman*, *Virechana*, *Basti*, etc.

Sneha Karma (Oleation Therapy).

- The word “*sneha*” means to make smooth or to oleate. *Snehan* is a combination of *abhyanga* (massages) and drinking specifically prepared ghee cultured with herbs. This ghee is prepared strictly according to Ayurvedic recipes. The dosage of this ghee is

dependent on many factors such as age, strength, and the constitution of the person. This ghee, should be consumed for at least three days during *snehan*. The ghee loosens all toxins stuck in the various areas of the body. Then massages and steam baths are administered to bring the toxins loosened by the ghee into the digestive tract to be expelled. The process by which *snehana* (unctuousness), *vishyandana* (fluidity), *mridutwa* (softness), and *kledana* (smoothness) is produced in body is known as “*Sneha Karma*.”

- Pre-operative ***Koshtha-pareeksha procedure*** (test to find out the strength of digestive tract) is done by intake of jaggery, sugarcane juice, milk, whey rice, pudding, ghee, grape juice, hot water etc., according to which the *dravyas* (material types) and their dosages are decided for oleation therapy.
- ***Pradhana Karma and Snehapana Vidhi***: Gargling to clear the oral cavity is needed and the patient is to be told to wander for a few minutes. After the digestion of diet consumed on the previous day, spiritual rites are performed and medicated oil should be administered orally between 15-30 minutes after sunrise.

Specially prepared oils and *ghrita* (ghee) are administered which are prepared using different types of herbs like *brahmi*, *til* (sesame seeds) etc. Some of the preparations used are: *Phala ghrita*, *Phala Kalyana ghrita*, *Brahmi ghrita*, *Kalyana ghrita*, *Tila taila*, *Ksheerabala taila*, etc. Dosage for strong *Koshtha* is 1350 ml given over a period of seven days in increasing amount, for medium *Koshtha* 690 ml given over a period of five days and for *mrudu Koshtha* 270 ml given over a period of three days. **Anupana**: Hot water should be given immediately after consuming *ghrita*.

Sweda Karma (Sudation Therapy)

Procedure for Sudation, which follows oleation, is a steam bath which loosens the toxins by oleation into the digestive track (*Koshtha*) to be expelled by other procedures. The process by which *stambha* (stiffness), *gaurava* (heaviness), and *sheeta* (coldness) is relieved and which induces *sweda* (sweating) is known as “*Sweda Karma*.”

Signs and symptoms of proper *Sweda Karma*:

- Disappearance of coldness
- Relief from pain
- Smoothness of body

- Relief of stiffness
- Heaviness relieved

For the expulsion of aggravated *doshas*, eliminative therapy can be used.

Vamana Karma (Emesis). Expulsion of vitiated doshas through mouth can be termed as *vamana*. Emesis should be *conducted* when:

- *kapha* is vitiated
- *Pitta* occupies the place of *Kapha* and
- *Vata* predominant *Kapha* state.

Purva Karma. Persons eligible for emesis should undergo oleation and sudation. The day before emesis, diet which stirs up *kapha* is to be given. For example, *Gramya*, *Anupa*, and *Udaka mamsa*, fish, milk, and curd diet prepared with black gram and sesame.

After complete digestion of the diet taken on previous day, the person is asked to have head bath, sandalwood paste should be applied on the body, white clothes should be worn, and flower garlands donned.

After performing the spiritual rites, oil should be applied on the head and chest and gentle massage and sudation can be given. Afterwards the person is instructed to drink milk, sugarcane juice or *Yashtimadhu kwatha* as emetic drug should not be administered on an empty stomach.

Pradhana Karma. The person is made to sit comfortably in chair and orally one of the emetic drug formulations said should be administered. After administering emetic drug:

- Onset of perspiration indicates the liquefaction of *doshas*. *Romaharsha* indicates *doshas* dislodging from their places of stagnation. Abdominal distension indicates *doshas* reached the stomach. Nausea and salivation indicates the upward movement of *doshas*.

Head should not be bent too much while vomiting and the head should be supported. After proper emesis, there is:

- Feeling of relief in the heart, chest, sides, and head etc.,
- Body becomes light,
- Expulsion of *Kapha*.

Virechana Karma. Purgative drug should be administered only after completion of the period of *kapha* predominance, i.e. after 9 AM. Due to forceful action of the purgative drug, accumulated *kapha* reaches the left

side of the abdomen and duodenum and causes distension or dysentery. After screening the eligible women for purgation therapy and after oleation and sudation, light and warm diet aggravating *kapha* should be given the day before purgation. The person is asked to take sour fruit juice like *madi phala* and hot water. Purgative dose should be decided only after proper examination. To prevent vomiting, cold water should be sprinkled on the face immediately after administering the purgative drug. Then the mouth should be washed with hot water and the patient is instructed to smell fragrant substances. Afterwards, a little quantity of hot water is given at regular intervals to support the process. Cold water should not be used, even for washing. *Vata*, *mutra*, *purisha*, *pitta* and *kapha* will be expelled in a sequence. If the purgative drug is being digested without doing its function, a second dose can be given on the same day. Usually purgation is sufficient as a part of physical preconception care. If other treatment methods like *Basti* or *Nasya* are needed, they should be done as per classical description. If the person is suffering with any *Yonivyapad*, *Artavavyapad* specific treatment should be given.

After the above purification and eating a natural diet, *asthapan* (evacuation enema) and *anuvasan* (nutritive enema), *Basties* should be given. After the purifying measures, men should take *ghrita* and milk medicated with sweet herbs (anabolic medicines) and women should consume oil with *Masa* (a type of kidney bean).

Care in the Psychological Plane

Accidental pregnancies are totally prohibited in Ayurveda. The physical, mental, and spiritual state of both the parents is represented in their ovum and sperm. These properties decide the foundation development (*Prakriti*) of the embryo. Vaidya (Ayurvedic Physician), after eliciting the desire of women about the kind of child she wants to conceive, advises her to think about those countries and use their mode of life, special diet behavior, and even the garments. Maharshi Charak Ayurvedic and Research Center says the born child emulates the characters of the creatures that come in thoughts of woman during coitus and emphasizes the importance of happy mood. Maharshi Sushrut (Shashtri, 2014) opines that whatsoever type of diet, behavior, and conduct is followed by the couple at the time of intercourse, the born child possesses the similar characters.

Everything in the surroundings coming in contact with the woman, like grains, clothes, ornaments, garden, drums, songs, bed sheet, cow, horse, etc. (in short, the environment and psychology of the woman) should be identical to the type of child she wants. She should practice similar behavior in terms of faith, hearing, truth, honesty, humanity, straight forwardness, charity, compassion, mercy, and politeness and courtesy as she wishes to manifest in the nature of her child. Coitus was

exclusively meant for reproduction and not for carnal pleasure. This shows the strong will power of the person and a method for limiting the family (Tiwari, 2014).

Care in the Plane of Consciousness

After the above preparation, the preceptor should guide for the specific ritual and the right person should start the ritual. A *Putreshti Yajna* is performed by the priest. It is a well-described ritual with many actions sitting in a particular direction using fragrant white flowers, water, *ghrita*, and sacred mantras. They should perform the oblation daily in the fire kept in altar of the house and eat daily leftover material after oblation properly, while chanting the same mantras. The following hymn should be recited just before the coitus: “*Ahirisi sarvatah pratisthasi dhata tva dadhatu Brahma varchasa bhav*” which translates to:

O fetus you are like the sun to me, you are my life, you are my fame and reputation. May God protect you and may you obtain true spiritual knowledge.

“*Brahma Brahaspatih visnuh somah suryastha asvinau bhago tha Mitra Varunou viram dadutu me sutam,*” which can be read as:

Lords Brahma, Vrahaspatih, Visnuh, Somah, Surya, Asvini Kumar, Bhag and Mitru Varuna have divine power; bless me with courage, health, and good progeny.

Garbhadhan

The mind of fetus is influenced by the thoughts of its parents prior to and during the act of conception. Conception should not occur at a new, foreign, or distant place, for example, during a honeymoon or while getting out for a change. *Vastu*, hygiene, positive energy, and purity of the place is to be taken into consideration. Healing music promotes the hormonal balance, such as Vedic chants, specific *ragas*, verses of *Sam Veda*. The chanting of “OM” increases happiness and enthusiasm. The period of conception should be before the 16th day of menstruation. Before the actual *garbhadhan*, the couple should observe one month celibacy and conserve their *shukra dhatu* to produce healthy sperm and ovum. Just before intercourse for conception, the couple should not be thirsty, hungry, nor should they have eaten too much food. Mutual love and respect for each other and genuine desire to produce a child together should be there. Feelings such as anxiety, sadness, mourning, and anger should be avoided. The home environment should be pleasant and should radiate contentment.

The ideal time for conception should be before 1:30 AM, preferably before midnight, and is not advisable during day time. Winter season is preferred. The bedroom should be peaceful, clean, and purified with *dhoop* and the bed should be covered with a white bed sheet and natural fragrance should be used. There should be no thorny plants or casually placed items, as these are the signs of disorganization. The couple should dress in white. Ayurveda directs that the women should get into bed with her left foot first and the man with his right foot first. Before sexual intercourse, the mantras should be recited as described in the above section of care in the plane of consciousness (Tambe, 2014).

Place of conception should not occur in new or foreign place. It is good to choose a place with a familiar energy and built according to *Vastu* (Tambe, 2014). The positions and the way of coition have also been described and some positions have been prohibited in the literature. To obtain a desired progeny, the husband, while making the wife lie down on a soft comfortable bed, should keep his wife on right side and repeat the name *vamadevya* in low tone and perform the act (coitus) gradually (gently). Thus, the baby is conceived with full awareness of its physical, mental, and spiritual attributes.

Garbhini paricharya or antenatal care has been described in great detail and guidance regarding diet, lifestyle and thinking pattern has been given, and various remedies for disorders during pregnancy have been described.

Conclusion

The above knowledge was assembled after studying commentaries written by knowledgeable scholars who led a life of sanctity and were completely devoted to God and dedicated to the study of literature. Discussions with some of their disciples were undertaken in person and it was concluded that the ancient Indian literature described the process of formation of human individuals as being bio-psycho-spiritual process. It has been equated with the process of formation of the universe which evolves from the interplay of *Purusha* (supreme soul or God or consciousness) and *Prakriti* (the primal nature). *Purusha* at his free will gets mixed up with un-manifest primal nature giving rise to the knowable empirical universe. This consciousness takes up *manas*, (mind) and four subtle elements (Air, fire, water and earth) and mixes with the zygote formed by union of sperm and ovum. This intricate process gives rise to a human body which takes shape with a mind and intellect already incorporated into it. The awareness that the body is just the manifestation of subtle energies (*purusha and prakriti*) gives parents a new perspective of their own self and of the baby. The awareness (consciousness) about the process of the formation of the human being makes us understand that it is not just a physical entity that is forming and growing inside the womb but a

complete person with all its intelligence and mental capacities is coming into being. It is forming template for forming its personalities in all the roles that it will come across throughout its life.

The ancient literature emphasize the need for planning with a pure intention of conceiving a universal being with a unique. As is the intention, so is the baby with high moral values is born who would induce a positive change in the world. These preparations also prevent unintended pregnancies and so save the incoming soul from humiliation of being unwanted on one hand and help in development of a complete healthy and virtuous human being on the other hand.

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