

Agniraja Complex: Unravelling the Psychology of Agniraja in the Story of Kartika Rishi from Vaddaradhane

Dr. Shripad Bhat

Assistant Professor, Department of Kannada, University College of Arts, Tumkur University, Tumkur, Karnataka, India

Abstract:

Agniraja is a pivotal character in the ancient Kannada story collection, Vaddaradhane, which consists of 19 stories. One of these stories, the story of Kartika Rishi, stands out for its complex exploration of human behaviour and its moral implications. Agniraja, a king, becomes embroiled in a scandalous relationship with his daughter, Krititike, which leads to tragic consequences. His actions are deemed unacceptable by his subjects, who distance themselves from his kingdom. This paper explores the psychological underpinnings of Agniraja's behaviour and attempts to define a new psychological complex—Agniraja Complex—based on this ancient narrative. The paper examines the human patterns of behaviour represented in the story and their relevance to modern psychological discourse.

Keywords: Psychological behaviour, Agniraja, complex, Vaddaradhane, Bhagavad Geetha,

1. Introduction

Modern psychology suggests that psychological complexes manifest in the subconscious mind and influence an individual's behaviour. These complexes, named based on the nature of the emotions or actions they evoke, help in understanding the patterns of human conduct. As society and lifestyle evolve, so too do the manifestations of these psychological phenomena. Although much has been studied about human behaviour, certain complexes remain unnamed and unexplored in contemporary psychological literature. One such instance is found in the ancient Kannada text *Vaddaradhane*, a work dating back to the 9th century BCE. This text, which contains 19 stories, presents an insightful exploration of human nature through parables and allegories.

Among the stories in *Vaddaradhane*, the tale of Agniraja and his daughter Krititike (featured as the 11th story in the collection) is particularly striking. This story portrays a disturbing and complex behavioural pattern, one that has not been fully explored or named in modern psychology. The story reflects a deviation from traditional human relationships and societal norms, capturing the darker side of human desires and actions. This paper endeavours to identify and name this psychological complex, which, based on the actions and consequences within the story, will be referred to as the "Agniraja Complex."

2. Vaddaradhane and the Story of Agniraja:

Vaddaradhane is recognized as one of the earliest examples of prose in Kannada literature, thought to have been written around 920 BCE. While there are differing opinions about its authorship—some attribute it

to Shivakotyacharya, while others credit Bhrajishnu—its significance in Kannada literary tradition remains unquestioned. The text was first published in a series by D.L. Narasimhachar in 1932, and it continues to be an important subject of study in both literary and philosophical discussions.

The narrative of Agniraja and Krititike forms a part of Vaddaradhane, and it is one of the most controversial and psychologically intriguing stories within the text. The tale is set in the kingdom of Kruttikapura, ruled by King Agniraja. Agniraja had a wife, Veeramathi, and six daughters, with Krititike being the youngest and most beautiful of them. The king, captivated by Krititike's beauty, develops an unhealthy attachment to her. In an attempt to possess her, Agniraja goes to great lengths to manipulate those around him.

The text recounts the king's decision to marry Krititike after a series of discussions with his ministers, advisers, and the sages of his kingdom. When Agniraja asks his ministers what should belong to the king above all else, they unanimously respond that the most valuable possessions in the kingdom should belong to him. The king, not satisfied with this answer, turns to the sages for counsel. However, the sages, displaying wisdom, respond with caution, asking the king to clarify what he considers most valuable to him. Enraged by their response, Agniraja exiles the sages who oppose him and appoints those who support his desires.

Agniraja's obsession with Krititike leads him to forcibly marry her, which causes a rift between him and his wife, Veeramathi, who leaves him in protest. The consequences of his actions extend beyond his immediate family, leading to a series of tragic events.

3. Tragic Consequences of Agniraja's Actions:

Agniraja's marriage to Krititike results in the birth of two children: Kartik and Veerashree. As the children grow, Kartik enters a school where the other children receive tiffin from their maternal grandfather. Kartik, curious about his own maternal grandfather, asks his mother who he is. His mother, shocked by the question, reveals the truth about his birth—his father, Agniraja, had married his own daughter, Krititike. This revelation devastates Kartik, who is deeply troubled by the truth about his lineage. Unable to reconcile with the incestuous nature of his birth, Kartik becomes a sanyasi (ascetic), retreating from worldly life to seek spiritual solace.

In a parallel development, Veerashree, Kartik's sister, is married to King Krouncha of Kogali. One day, Veerashree recognizes her brother Kartik, who is now a sanyasi. She attempts to convince him to return home, but the king, upon seeing the two together, mistakenly assumes that they are engaged in an illicit relationship. In a fit of rage and misunderstanding, Krouncha kills Kartik, which horrifies Veerashree. The sight of her brother's murder leaves her mute, unable to speak.

In the aftermath, King Krouncha organizes a festival, the Badubbe Habba, (A type of festival), in an attempt to restore his wife's speech. A tomb, or Basadi, is constructed at the site where Kartik was killed to commemorate the tragic events. The people of the kingdom blame Agniraja for the chain of events, asserting that his sinful actions have led to the moral decay of the kingdom. As the king behaves immorally, so too do his subjects, who abandon dharma (righteousness) and engage in sinful actions.

Historical records, including inscriptions from the Kogali region, further highlight the social consequences of Agniraja's actions. These records indicate that the people of Agniraja's kingdom were known as the "lost people," or *Halooru*, (or the lost village) a term used to describe a community where human relationships and moral values had been undermined. This suggests that the consequences of Agniraja's immoral behaviour permeated not only his immediate family but also the wider society, resulting in a breakdown of ethical norms.

The Agniraja's story can be viewed in another aspect too- that is- The Agniraja story is an example for a popular Sanskrit subhashita, which goes like this-*Aahaara nidra bhaya maithunancha, Samaanametat pashubhir naraanaam, dharma hiteshaamadhiko, vishesho dharmena dharmena heenaa pashubhi samaanaha*. In this ubhashitam, the Indian tradition has explained the equality among all the creatures, including the human being. But human being differs from other being apart from desire, hunger and sleeping, because of his Viveka or righteous thinking power. If he does not use his proper thinking capacity, one should take proper guidance from the elders. Agniraja does neither. In his every action his future could be disastrous. He never thinks about this or the consequences of his actions. But the sages or sanyasis of his kingdom are attached to none. They think about the future consequences and that's why they are very particular in giving their advice on his demand, they want the particular thing what the king is about to possess, King Denys their word, and falls into his own desires, face the worst thing. The same is visible in Agniraja's story and it happens to Agniraja and to his family.

This story is also an example for a popular Sanskrit subhashita, which goes like this-*Aahaara nidra bhaya maithunancha, Samaanametat pashubhir naraanaam, dharma hiteshaamadhiko, vishesho dharmena dharmena heenaa pashubhi samaanaha*, in this ubhashitam, the Indian tradition has explained the equality among all the creatures, including the human being. But human being differs from other being apart from desire, hunger and sleeping, because of his Viveka or thinking power. If he does not use this in his every action, his future may be disastrous. The same is visible in Agniraja's story and it happens to Agniraja and to his family.

Agniraja's behaviour seems to be abnormal in our family structure, but we cannot deny this type of behaviour it is a profound violation of our normal both social and familial values. Agniraja's actions shows us if a person turns his back to viveka, what would be the consequence. In a normal family structure usually, we do not think about This type of behavior. Because usually the traditional family structure engages family members in such a way. If a person involved seriously in a family affair, it would not allow him to engage himself in such an activity. Moreover, our family structure teaches every family member.

4. Psychological Analysis: The Agniraja Complex:

The story of Agniraja raises profound questions about human behaviour, ethics, and the psychological implications of immoral actions. In modern psychology, certain behaviours are often classified into recognizable complexes, such as the Oedipus complex, where a child harbours unconscious desires for the opposite-sex parent. However, the psychological behaviour exhibited by Agniraja—particularly his incestuous attraction to his daughter and his complete disregard for moral and societal norms—does not neatly align with any of the established complexes in contemporary psychology.

Agniraja's behaviour represents a deviation from normative human relationships, marked by a profound violation of both social and familial ethics. His actions suggest a deeper, subconscious drive that overpowers his ability to reason or adhere to accepted moral frameworks. This could be seen as a psychological complex that arises from an unchecked desire for power and control, which ultimately leads to the destruction of familial bonds and the destabilization of societal order.

While modern psychology has named various complexes that address abnormal human behaviours—such as the Oedipus complex or Electra complex—there is no existing psychological term that accurately captures the nature of Agniraja's actions. Therefore, this paper proposes the term "Agniraja Complex" to describe the psychological condition manifested in Agniraja's behaviour. This complex refers to an individual's overwhelming and destructive desires that lead to the violation of natural and societal norms,

particularly in familial relationships, and result in catastrophic consequences.

5. Conclusion:

The story of Agniraja, as told in *Vaddaradhane*, offers a striking portrayal of a psychological complex that remains unnamed in contemporary psychology. Agniraja's actions, characterized by his incestuous relationship with his daughter Krititike and his complete disregard for moral and societal boundaries, reflect a deep and troubling psychological condition. This paper has attempted to recognize and name this complex as the "Agniraja Complex," a condition that reflects the destructive power of unchecked desires and the violation of fundamental ethical norms.

By exploring the psychological dimensions of Agniraja's behaviour, this paper contributes to a deeper understanding of the complexities of human nature, as depicted in ancient literature. The Agniraja Complex may serve as a valuable framework for analyzing similar patterns of behaviour in both historical and contemporary contexts, providing insights into the darker aspects of human psychology and the consequences of moral decay.

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