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भूतपूर्व कुलपति, सम्पूर्णानन्द संस्कृतविश्वविद्यालय, वाराणसी; नयी दिल्ली

डा. रामचन्द्र नारायण दाण्डेकर

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पुराणम्—PURĀNA

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व्यासपूर्णिमाङ्कः

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By *Ganga Sagar Rai*

'व्यासाष्टकम्'

(वाणङ्गतीर्थकृतम्)

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय

लोकोत्तरं विष्णुनवावतारं
ज्ञानैकसारं जगदेकहारम् ।
द्वैपायनं दिव्यमुनिं वदान्यं
व्यासं महाभारतमानतोऽस्मि ॥ १
दिव्यास वेदानीति सर्ववेद-
व्यासो बभौ वेदविदां वरेण्यः ।
पराशरर्षिप्रियपुत्रमेनं
महामुनिं साञ्जलि नौमि नित्यम् ॥ २
नानापुराणोद्गतदिव्यतेजो-
विभासभानाय विदाम्बराय ।
वेदार्थतत्त्वप्रविकस्वराय
विद्यावदाताय नमोऽस्तु तस्मै ॥ ३
सरस्वतीपावनकूलवासं
विधाय येन भुवनं व्यभासि ।
व्यासाय तस्मै श्रुतसम्प्रदाय-
महर्षये सन्तु नमांसि भूयः ॥ ४
श्रीकृष्णवर्णाय श्रुतिप्रमोद-
प्रकर्षवर्षाय महाव्रताय ।
संसारविज्ञानविभास्वराय
व्यासाय तस्मै सततं नमोऽस्तु ॥ ५
प्रतिस्मृतिख्यापितसिद्धविद्या-
विद्योत्तितं पाण्डवपक्षरक्षम् ।
शुकस्य पुत्रस्य कृते तपन्तं
व्यासं मुनिश्रेष्ठमहं नमाभि ॥ ६

कालैकमूलं जगदेतदस्ति

तत्रैव लोकस्य चिरप्रतिष्ठा ।

इत्युच्चकैर्घोषमनुध्वनन्तं

द्वैपायनं तं हृदि चिन्तयामि ॥ ७

श्रीशङ्कराचार्यगुरुप्रथाया

आद्यं गुरुं वन्द्यपदं मुनीन्द्रम् ।

अद्वैतसैद्धान्तिकसूत्रकारं

तपोनिधिं व्यासमहं भजामि ॥ ८

व्यासाष्टकमिदं पुण्यं प्रत्यहं यः पठेन्नरः ।

लोकेऽस्मिन् मोदमानोऽसौ पुण्यपुञ्जमुपार्जयेत् ॥ ९

इति श्री व्यासाष्टकं सम्पूर्णम् । श्री श्रीवाणङ्गतीर्थस्य
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संग्राहकः

आचार्य रमापद चक्रवर्ती

SŪTA-THE PAURĀṆIKA

By

Sindhu S. Dange

[अस्मिन् निबन्धे विदुष्या लेखिकया पौराणिकवाङ्मयस्य प्रचारकस्य सूतस्य उत्पत्ति-कार्यादिविषये विवेचनं कृतम् । वैदिकवाङ्मयेन सह लौकिकवाङ्मयस्यापि समुद्भूतिः विद्वद्भिरुहिताऽस्ति । गाथा-नाराशंसी वाकोवाक्येतिहासपुराणादीनां प्राचीनत्वं वेदे एव समुपवर्णितमस्ति । अतः इदं प्रतीयते यत् सूतस्य संबन्धः प्राचीनवैदिकविद्यया सह लौकिकविद्ययाऽस्ति । पुराणवाङ्मये लौकिकविषयातिरिक्तं वैदिकविषयाणां विषयाः समाविष्टाः सन्ति । एषां सर्वेषां विषयाणां सूतः ज्ञाताऽऽसीत् । यद्यपि सूतस्योत्पत्तिः पुराणेषु स्मृतिषु च प्रतिलोमेनान् वर्णिताऽस्ति तथापि तस्य महत्त्वं सम्मानं च ब्राह्मण-तुल्यमेवासीत् । तस्य वधे बलरामोपरि ब्रह्महत्या समापतिता । सूतस्य उपनयनस्य वेदपाठ-स्यापि अधिकारो वर्णितोऽस्ति । अत्र लेखिकया प्रतिपादितं यत् सूतस्य संबन्धः सोमयागेनापि वर्तते । अत्र विविधपुराणानामितरप्रमाणानां चाधारेण एतद्विषये साङ्गोयाङ्गं विवेचनं प्रस्तुतं विदुष्या लेखिकया ।]

Purāṇas occupy a distinct place in the literature of ancient India. They stand unique for they brought along with them the ancient Vedic thought combining with it several trends in religious thought, mythical accounts regarding creation, philosophical as well as ethical teachings and various other accounts of the traditional lore, to be called ultimately the soul of the Vedas (*ātmā purāṇam vedānām*). *Vāyu Purāṇa* speaks of the Purāṇaveda (1. 15a), thus conferring a status of the Veda on the *Purāṇa-s*.

It has to be pointed out that some of the traditional, mythical and historical accounts and tales can be traced as far back as the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* which has prescribed *Anuśāsana*, *Vidyā*, *Vākovākya*, *Itihāsa-Purāṇa*, *Nārāśāmsī-s* and *Gāthā-s* to be studied along with such intrinsic Vedic texts as *R̥gveda*, *Yajurveda*, *Sāmaveda* and *Atharvaaveda* (XI. 5. 6. 4-8). Even the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* echoes the same thought (II. 4.10; IV. 5. 11.). *Anuśāsanas* according to *Sāyaṇa* denote the six auxiliary sciences of the Veda¹ and the term *Vidyā* signifies the Trayī *Vidyā*.² According to Eggeling, *Vidyā* signifies more likely, such special sciences as the *Sarpavidyā*. He refers to the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (XIII. 4.

1. Macdonell, A. A. and Keith, A. B. *Vedic Index of Names and Subjects*, under "Anuśāsana".

2. *Ibid.* under "Vidyā".

3. 9) where a clear mention of Sarpavidyā is made.³ Though strictly not non-Vedic, Vidyā could be taken as having its origin in the folk-tradition. Vākovākya indicates dialogues like the Brahmodya and lucid narrations. 4 Itihāsa-Purāṇa is a joint word and signifies the traditional lore, containing the old tales of adventure, creation of universe or genealogy of dynasties,⁵ getting the title of the Pañcamaveda in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VII. 1. 2.). Yāska explains some *mantra-s* in the *Ṛgveda* with the help of some Itihāsa-s (*Nirukta* II. 7). However in some texts Itihāsa and Purāṇa are regarded as separate.⁶

Nārāśaṃsī signify compositions comprising praise of *nara* (man) generally the king. These could thus bear similarity with the *Dānastuti-s* in the *Ṛgveda*. *Gāthās* were the compositions that were sung (fr. *ga*-to sing). Macdonell and Keith include the Nārāśaṃsī in the *Gāthā*, taking the latter term to have a wider scope.⁷

It is difficult to believe that all these various types of learning came strictly from the Vedic tradition. In this respect the comments of the Brāhmaṇa-texts regarding the *Gāthā* and the Nārāśaṃsī types deserve note. According to the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (VII. 18=33. 6). *ṛc* (a verse from the *Ṛgveda*) is divine (*daiva*), while *gāthā* is human (*mānuṣa*) The *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* (1.3.2.6) relates an account that once the gods separated the dirty part from the divine Speech as also from the food. The dirty part from the divine Speech became the *Gāthā-s* and the *Nārāśaṃsī-s*, while that of the food became wine. Even so, several *Gāthā-s* as well as *Yajñagāthā-s* are incorporated in the *Brāhmaṇa*-texts.

In addition to the types mentioned above, a note has to be taken of the Pāriplava cycle of legends, consisting of mini-cycles, each of ten days, mentioned in the context of the Horse-sacrifice. This cycle lasted for one year, while the sacrificial horse was away from the sacrificial chamber with the royal entourage. At the end of the daily ritual when the Hoṭṛ priest had finished for the day, chief of lute-players used to sing the deeds of the past kings, thus bringing the present sacrificer-king in line with the royal sacrificers of the past. In the Pāriplava, mention is specifically made of the 'veda' (lore) of various tribes that are present at the recitation of these

3. Eggeling, J., *The Śatapatha Brahmana*, pt. V, *SBE*, vol. 44, Delhi, 1978 (1900). P. 98 f.n. 3.

4. Macdonell, A. A., and Keith, A. B., *op. cit.* under "Vākovākya".

5. *Ibid.* under "Itihāsa".

6. *Gopatha Br* I. 10 mentions the Itihāsa-veda and Purāṇa-veda separately. Also see Vārttika and Mahābhāṣya on Pāṇini Sū. IV. 2.60 Itihāsa can be explained as iti-hā-āsa ("This was so") and the Purāṇa could mean an ancient text; also Brahmāṇḍa P. II. 4. 4. 54cd यस्मात् पुरा ह्यणन्तीदं पुराणं तेन चोच्यते ॥

"As they sound (speak) it in ancient times, it is called *purāṇa*."

7. Macdonell, A. A. and Keith, A. B., *op. cit.* under "Gāthā"

cycles. At these cycles, it is the Vedic priest Hotṛ that narrates the particular tribal 'veda.' (*Sat. Br.* XIII. 4.3.3-15). But, that probably has to be understood as a later phase. The earlier and more probable phase must be the narration or recitation by a narrator of the specific tribe.

Efforts have been made to seek the source of these narrations and compositions that do not exactly tally with the Vedic ritual tradition but have been so assimilated with it as to have almost formed part of it. Paul Horsch has suggested their origin to be in the non-Vedic tradition,⁸ while Chakrabarti has propounded that while some Ākhyānas originated from the theologians, popular Ākhyānas developed in all probability on the periphery of the sacred literature, and gradually gained entry into the sacred literature itself, being included in the Svādhyāya⁹. However it is more right to see the source of these compositions and narratives in the Vedic secular tradition thriving simultaneously with the Vedic ritual tradition. Such tradition was preserved by a special class known as *Sūta*. Hariappa believes that the practice of preserving the narrations of various events was prevalent in the period of the *Ṛgveda*, or even earlier¹⁰. Dandekar has convincingly proposed that right from the beginning, there have been two traditions—that of the *mantra*-s and the other preserved by the *sūta*-s¹¹. We have to say that this *sūta*-tradition played a very vital role in the composition and preservation of the secular type of literature. At the same time it also helped the assimilation of this type of literature with the Vedic ritual literature, ultimately achieving a complete fusion between the Vedic tradition and the folk-tradition.

Sūta the representative of this tradition can be positively traced to the *Atharvaveda* which mentions the *sūta* as *rājakṛt*.¹² In one of the formulas called Śatarudriya, at the *Yajurveda* Rudra is praised as a *sūta* who does not harm or kill¹³. In the Rājasūya sacrifice (royal consecration) the sacrificing king has to offer oblations at the houses of various of his officers, called *ratnin*. Among them figures the *sūta*¹⁴. The

8. Horsch Paul, *Die vedische Gāthā-und Śloka* Literatur Francke Verlag, Bern, 1966. III part of the book—chapters on Origin and Development of the *gāthā*-s.

9. Chakrabarti, Samiran Chandra, "A Study of the Pāriplava" *Indo-Iranian Journal*, 32. Kluwer Academic Publishers (printed in the Netherlands). 1989. 262.

10. Hariappa, H. L., *Ṛgvedic Legends Through the Ages*, Poona, 1953, p. 132.

11. Dandekar, R. N., "The Mahābhārata : Origin and Growth," *University of Ceylon Review*, 12, 1954, p 65.

12. *Atharvaveda* III. 5. 7ab-- ये राजानो राजकृतः सूता ग्रामण्यश्च ये ।

13. *Vājasaneyi Samhitā* XVI. 18 नमः सूताय अहन्त्यै
Taittirīya Sam. IV. 5.2.1. नमः सूताय अहन्त्याय
Kāthaka Sam. XVII. 2 Where *sūta* is said to be ahantva.

Maitrāyaṇī Sam. II. 9.3. नमः सूताय अहन्त्याय

14. Macdonell, A. A. and Keith, A.B. *op. cit.* under "Sūta".

commentators of the treatises on ritual have rendered the word *sūta* as charioteer or the guard of the horses; and this rendering has also been accepted by some scholars¹⁵. However, Eggeling has proposed that *sūta*, at the Vedic period, had the same connotation as in the later period of the epics. His business was to compose and sing the praise of the king, and also record important chronicles¹⁶. According to Weber, the *sūta* was an honorable person at the royal court and could see the king freely¹⁷. It is interesting to question in our mind, if this person, so near the throne, could penalize any one he had a grudge against, through the king. This doubt is, in view of the epithet of Rudra, at the Śatarudriya, 'the *sūta* who does not kill'. Was a *sūta* in a position, at the Vedic period, to harm any one? Was he so close to the ruler or the chieftain?

The Mahābhārata mentions the *sūta*, among the sages who come to meet Bhīṣma, when the latter is lying on the bed of arrows. Here the *sūta* is referred to as 'strict adherent of the code of conduct' (*paramadhārmika*) (Śānti. 12.47). At another place he is mentioned as the son of Viśvāmitra (Anuśāsana. 4.49.57c)¹⁸. Lomahaṛṣaṇa a *sūta*, had a son named Ugraśravas, who is referred to as Sauti (*sūta+īñ*, in the sense of the son of *sūta*) and who narrated the *Mahābhārata* to the sages including Śaunaka (Ādi. 1.5-21). It is mentioned in this context that the stories compiled in the Mahābhārata were narrated by Vyāsa and Vaisampāyana. These stories were securely collected by Ugraśravas. He narrated the same to Śaunaka and other sages. The *Agni Purāṇa* says that the *sūta* compiled the text of the *Purāṇas* due to the favour of Vyāsa (150.31). This gives a fair description of the *sūta*, as a person who committed to memory, or maintained, the ancient records and narrations and often added to them. In other words he combined in himself the office of the chronicler, composer and narrator. He was the earlier type of the Paurāṇika.

About his origin it is stated that he was one born to a *brāhmaṇa* woman from a *kṣatriya* (*Manu Sm.* x. 11, 17; *Yajñ.Sm.* 1.93), The

15. *Ibid.*

16. Eggeling, J., *op. cit.* pt. III, *SBE*, vol. 41 Delhi, 1989 (1894), p.62.f.n.1.

17. Macdonell, A. A., and Keith, A. B., *op. cit. loc. cit.*

18. Viśvāmitra who was a *kṣatriya* but gained the status of a Brahmarṣi, had hundred sons. When he adopted Śunaḥṣepa as his son, according to the latter's desire, his sons, elder than his son Madhucchandas, did not approve of it. So, he cursed them to be Āndhra, Puṇḍra, Śabara, Pulinda, Mūṭiba etc. These are the tribal people, the account obviously indicating assimilation of these people with the Vedic Aryans, by stating that they were none other than the sons of an Aryan person. To come to the point-Madhucchandas and those who were younger than him accepted the decision of their father. cf. *Ait. Br.* VII. 18=33.6 In the *Mbh* the list of the sons of Viśvāmitra starts from Madhucchandas onwards; it includes the *sūta*. cf. *Mbh.* Anuśāsana 4.50-59.

Purāṇa-s shed welcome and illuminating light on the *sūta*, born of a mixed marriage of the *pratiloma* type. After the castes were fixed in the then society, there seems to have arisen a question about the exact status to be given to the *sūta*. The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* narrates an interesting account in this context. According to it, once the sages were performing a sacrifice of long duration (*sattra*) in the forest called Naimiṣa. At it on the seat of Vyāsa (the chief compiler of the purāṇa-s) was seated the *śūta* Romaharṣaṇa¹⁹. When Balarāma came to attend the session, Romaharṣaṇa did not rise from his seat, not did he fold his hands to show respect to him. Balarāma flew into rage on seeing this honour bestowed on the *sūta*—the son of a mixed caste and also *sūta*'s behaviour which he disliked. Balarāma shot a pointed blade of *kuśa* grass at Romaharṣaṇa, which pierced the latter's vitals and killed him. The sages disapproved this misbehaviour of Balarāma, because they had willingly offered the position of honour to Romaharṣaṇa till the conclusion of the sacrifice, with the blessings of peaceful life for him. They declared that Balarāma was guilty of this murder, which they said was nothing less than the killing of a *brāhmaṇa* (brahmahatyā), because the seat Romaharṣaṇa was adorning was the Brahmāsana. They advised Balarā to undergo the required expiation. Balarāma saw his folly and accepted the wish of the sages. The first thing he did was to seat the son of Romaharṣaṇa on the Brahmāsana (X. 78. 20--40). As expiation, he roamed for one year visiting the holy places (*ibid.* chapter 79).

The account reveals certain points. The *sūta* (born of a *pratiloma* type of marriage) was not regarded as a *brāhmaṇa*. However, he was respected as he was a veritable human record of social and religious events, and was extremely knowledgeable.²⁰ Hence, at assemblies of narrations he was believed to be more important even than the *muni* and the *brāhmaṇa*. We could say, that as a Vedic ritual priest was honoured at a Vedic sacrifice, the *sūta* was respected at a popular function involving narrations of ancient events. The Agni Purāṇa, at the very beginning, states that the sages (*ṛṣi*-s and *muni*-s) like Śaunaka welcomed the *sūta*, who came to the Naimiṣa forest during his wanderings for visiting various holy places, and said to him, "O *sūta*, you are worthy of worship to us. Impart to us the information which would render us endowed with knowledge." (1.2.3.). The *sūta* replied that he would speak what he knew from such sages as Paila and Śuka, when he happened to stay in the

19. Romaharṣaṇa (also known as Lomaharṣaṇa) would cause horripilation (roma) on the bodies of his audience, through jṛy (harṣa) hence he was called. *Vayu P.* 1.13-

लोमानि हर्षयाञ्चक्रे श्रोतॄणां यतु सुभाषितैः ।

कर्मणा प्रथितस्तेन लोकेऽस्मिँल्लोमर्षणः ॥

20. *Padma P. Sṛṣṭi.* 1.28.

hermitage at Badarikā (Ibid. 1.6). This makes it clear that the vocation and practice of the *sūta* was to gather information from varied places. We would not be wrong if we propose that he was the fore-runner of Nārada, minus the latter's instinct to play mischief at times. It is to be noted that *sūta* is mentioned in the Vedic texts, as we have seen above. Nārada appears in the post-Vedic period, and does not displace *sūta*, whose importance continues.

At many places *sūta* is mentioned along with *māgadha*. The *Padma Purāṇa* (Bhūmikhaṇḍa, 28.74) states that these two were born to praise, indicating their profession by birth. Likewise are mentioned the *bandin* and the *cāraṇa*. They were not qualified for the duties laid down for a *brāhmaṇa* (*brahmācāra*). It appears that they were singers of praise (*stāvaka* *ibid* Bhūmi. 28.73). The *māgadha* appears to have a higher status than the *bandin* and the *cāraṇa*. The *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya says that the *māgadha* was born to a *kṣatriya* woman from a *vaiśya* man, and that one born to a *brāhmaṇa* woman from a *kṣatriya* man was a *sūta* (*Artha*. III. 7.27,28). According to Kauṭilya, the Paurāṇika *sūta* and *māgadha* are different from the *brāhmaṇa* and the *kṣatriya* (*ibid* III. 7. 29). Kangle translates the word 'Paurāṇika' as 'mentioned in the Purāṇa'²¹. This is not correct on the very face of it, as here the sense is of a person and not any matter concerning the *purāṇa*-s. Moreover it is not warranted by grammar, which represents the colloquial usage of the words along with their meanings prevalent in those times. It has to be noted that Pāṇini and Kauṭilya were comparatively mutually closer to each other chronologically. On the *sūtra--kratūkthādisūtrāntātṭhak* (*Pān. Sū.* IV. 2. 60) there is a *vārttika---ākhyāna-ākhyāyikā-itihāsa-purāṇebhyaṣthagvaktavyaḥ*, having the *anuvṛtti* of *tadadhīte tadveda* (*ibid* IV.2.59) i.e. the sense being 'who has studied that' or 'who understands that', but not having the *anuvṛtti* of the suffix '*aṇ*' because here the suffix '*ṭhak*' (*ika*) debar the suffix '*aṇ*'. Thus the word '*paurāṇika*' means a person who has studied the *purāṇa* or *purāṇa*-s.

For Kauṭilya the *sūta* and the *māgadha* were of a higher status, though born of *pratiloma* type of marriage. While laying down the salaries to be paid to different persons, Kauṭilya mentions *paurāṇika sūta* and *māgadha* to whom one thousand *paṇa*-s are to be paid (*Artha*. V. 3. 13). *Sūta* in later times was associated with the training of horses and elephants (*Vāyu P.* 62.32), and he also worked as a charioteer (*Agni P.* 151. 15a *sutānām aśvasārathyam*). But there is a probability that there

21. On *Artha*. III. 7. 29.

see Kangle, R. P. *The Kautiliya Arthaśāstra*, pt. II (Eng. tr. with notes), Uni. of Bombay Pub., 2nd ed., 1972 (1963), p. 215.

was a separate class of the *sūta*-s (Paurāṇika) who studied, sang and explained the purāṇa-texts, as is indicated from the *Arthasāstra*.

The *māgadha*, *bandin* and *cāraṇa* were not entitled to the study of the Veda (*Padma P.* Bhūmi. 28.72.73). On the other hand, the *sūta* was entitled for the rite of initiation (*upanayana*) and could study the Veda-s, offer into the fire in the morning and in the evening (*agnihotra*), and follow the rules meant for a *brāhmaṇa*. He was supposed to be well-versed in various *śāstra*-s. All the same, he was a bit lower than the *brāhmaṇa*, as he was praised as always worshipping the *brāhmaṇa*-s along with the gods (*ibid* Bhūmi. 28.69-71). The *Kūrma P.* attests to the fact that the *sūta* had to be knowing all the *śāstra*-s and lores (1.13.13).

The status and importance bestowed upon the *sūta* is balanced by means of mythical accounts of his birth. The *Kūrma P.* states that the *sūta*, though a Paurāṇika, was Viṣṇu himself by his *māyā* (power) (1.13.12.). According to another mythical account commonly occurring in the *purāṇa*-texts, the *sūta* was born at a sacrifice performed by Pṛthu, the son of king Vena, and that along with him the *māgadha* was also born. According to the usual method of the *purāṇa*-texts, the birth of great heroes or uncommon persons has often been in a super-natural manner. In many cases it was associated with the sacrifice. To see some examples here---King Vena was killed by the sages just by their oral sound 'hum' (*hum-kāra*). The dark sin of Vena came out of his body in the form of the *niṣāda* (which suggests the colour of the *niṣāda*). Then they churned both the hands of Vena; from them was produced Pṛthu. In the same way, according to another account, king Nimi's body was churned; and from it was produced the king Janaka Vaideha of Mithila. According to yet another account, Trasadasyu was born from the stomach of king Yuvanāśva when the latter, unknowingly happened to drink the consecrated water at the sacrifice performed by himself. Trasadasyu came to be known as Māndhātā, as the god Indra himself breast-fed him as soon as he was born (The word māndhātā is derived as: mām [me]--*dhātā* [he will suck]. Dhṛṣṭadyumna and his sister Draupadī are said to have been born from the sacrificial altar (*Mbh.* Ādi. 166. 39-44). Sacrificial birth is a motif to show them great and to explain their superhuman exploits and power²².

About the birth of the *sūta* the *Vāyu P.* gives the following account : King Pṛthu performed the Soma-sacrifice in honour of Bṛhaspati, who is known as *pitāmaha* (grandfather'). So the sacrifice was called *pitāmaha*. In it, on the day the shoots of the soma-plant were pressed (the day is called *sautya*, from/*su*, 'to press for juice; hence also the word soma) the

22. Mrs. Dange, S. S., *The Bhāgavata Purāṇa Mytho-social Study*, Delhi, 1984, pp. 100-107

Sūta was born (the word is from/sū). It is said, that actually for the pressing rite the formula (*mantra*) in honour of Bṛhaspati was to be uttered, as the sacrifice was for him; but a formula for Indra was uttered through oversight., So, there happened a mixture of the Indra-*mantra* with the offering meant for Bṛhaspati. Bṛhaspati, the priest of the gods, was a brāhmaṇa; but Indra was a Kṣatriya. Now, the offering goes with the *mantra*. Hence, Indra got the upper hand. So, the *sūta*, born at this sacrifice got to be of mixed birth, wherein both the traits are present. By nature he is Bṛhaspati, learned in the tradition, allowed for the Vedic studies and respected even to the *brāhmaṇa*-s; but otherwise, he is lower than the latter in the social order. His association with the attendance on horses and elephants indicates his lower position, while his vocation of composing the praises of the kings goes with the control over speech, which is the trait of Bṛhaspati. After getting born at the sacrifice of Pṛthu, according to the myth noted above, the *sūta* and the *māgadha* are said to have composed the praise of the king first; and later, to praise the kings became their vocation. (*Vāyu P.* 62. 135--146)²³.

The question is, which could be the sacrifice in honour of Bṛhaspati? The *sautya* is the day on which *soma* is pressed for juice, as noted earlier; and it is the fifth day according to the arrangement of the Agniṣṭoma sacrifice, which is the norm for all *soma*-sacrifices²⁴. Offerings are given to the following deities on this day; Indra and Vāyu together, Mitra and Varuṇa together, the two Aśvins, among the deities²⁵. Bṛhaspati does not figure in this context. It is clear, hence, that this god was brought in the mythical account to answer the status of *sūta*. On The other hand, Indra figures among the deities, though with Vāyu²⁶. It is clear that the author of the account worked on the motif of the dual deities, as noted in the offerings, but brought in Bṛhaspati, as he was reckoned as the god of learning and intellect. Did the gods have castes? Well, the way of the *purāṇa*-s to convince the people is at the back of this innovation. Indra is the *kṣatriya* as he is the killer of the demons; Bṛhaspati is the lord of *mantra*-s, and the *brāhmaṇa*-s recite the *mantra*-s; hence Bṛhaspati is a *brāhmaṇa*!

According to the *Vāyu P.* (62.145) Pṛthu gave *sūta* the region called Anūpa, and to the *māgadha* he gave that that of Magadha. Anūpa appears to be to the south of Revā²⁷. Magadha is the eastern Bihar of the

23. *Vāyu P.* 1.26-33; 62-135-146 *Padma P. Bhūūmi* 28.67. *BrahmāMḍa P.* 1.2.36. 158-165 *Brahma P.* 4. 60 ff.

24. Kane, P. V., *History of Dharmaśāstra*, 2nd ed. Pune, 1974, p. 1161.

25. *Ibid.* 1175

26. *Ibid.* frn. 2596, the first oblation offered to Indra.

27. S. Muzafer Ali, *The Geography of the Purāṇas*, New Delhi, 1973 (1966), p. 162.

modern times. In the case of the region for the *sūta*, in this context, there is also the mention of Telanga (another reading is Kalinga) and also of Haihaya (*Padma P.* Bhūmi. 28.88,89). The Haihayas were divided into five classes of families and were residing in the valley of the river Chambal, which was very fertile²⁸. This would help understand how far the *sūta*-s have spread. However, it is not sound to say that the *sūta*-s had a different culture²⁹. They were a part of the Vedic Aryan culture, though they maintained the tradition of the common folks and mastered the art of collecting and preserving the myths and other stories of the populace.. The *Skanda P.* describes them as maintaining themselves by telling attractive and new stories (11, 2.11.15 *vicitrakathanājivāḥ*).

We have already seen how the *purāṇa*-texts resorted to give easily understandable etymologies, and how they connected the *sūta* to the *sautya* day³⁰. From this explanation it is indicated that the *sūta* was associated with the *soma*-sacrifice³¹. And this association, very probably, was as a narrator of, not only strikingly interesting mythical stories but also of, historical events. It is certain that the tradition of these *sūta*-s preserved the knowledge contained in the Vidyā, Vākovākya, Itihāsa-Purāṇa along with the various *gāthā*-s and *narāśamsī*-s. And falling in line with the *gāthā*-s are the *śloka*-s which occur at several places in the Brāhmaṇa texts. These *śloka*-s form a part of the traditional lore, preserved in the ritualistic tradition. The Vedic tradition had to incorporate portions from these types of knowledge in the sacrificial sessions³². The trend of assimilation of the secular into the sacred indicates the honour shown to the *sūta*-s.

28. *Ibid.* p. 158.

29. Ed. Joshi, Mahadevashastri, *Bhāratiya Samskr̥ti Kośa*, vol. Pune, 1970, p. 78B. Here under "sūta", we read the words sūta-samskr̥ti' (culture of the sūta-s).

30. Mrs. Dange, S. S. *PURANIC ETYMOLOGIES AND FLEXIBLE FORMS*, ALIGARH, 1989, PT. A PP. 7-121.

31. *Brahmāṇḍa P.* 1.2.36. 159 ab- सोमे सुते समुत्पन्नः सूतः सौत्ये तदाहनि ।
vāyu P. 62. 135 ab-सूतः सुत्यां समुत्पन्नः सौत्येऽहनि महामतिः ।
Padma P. 28. 67 cd- सूतसूत्यां समुत्पन्नः सौम्येहनि महात्मनि ॥

32. *Yajñagāthā*-s recited in the sacrifice were composed on the pattern of the *gāthā*-s For *Yajñagāthā*, see Sāyaṇa on Ait. Br. VII. 8=32.7

एषा वक्ष्यमाणा यज्ञमभिलक्ष्य सर्वैर्गीयमाना यज्ञगाथा

याज्ञिकैर्गीयते पठ्यते । Also Sāy. on *Ibid* VII. 9=32.8; V.6 = 22.1 Also see Mrs. Dange, S. S., "Songs from Secular Tradition," *Aspects of Speech in Vedic Ritual*, New Delhi, 1996; and for *Yajñagāthās*, *Ibid.* pp. 209-212.

*PURĀṆA AND ŚĀSTRA

By

Sadashiv A. Dange

[अस्मिन् निबन्धे पुराणस्यार्थस्य विवेचनं प्राचीनत्वं महत्त्वं च पुष्कलप्रमाणैः प्रतिपादितमस्ति । विदुषा लेखकेन पुराणानां शास्त्रत्वमप्यत्र प्रतिपादितम् । पुराकथाविषये एतद्विषयकान्यसाहित्यानामध्ययनमुपयोगि वर्तते । पुराणानां शास्त्रज्ञानविषये धर्मशास्त्र-साहित्यस्यापि तुलनात्मकमध्ययनं सहायकं भविष्यति ।]

Like many words that have come down to us, and have lost their original connotation, the word Purāṇa has had some shifts in its meaning. The general meaning of this word is 'old'. It is also used in common language to indicate a much prolonged (or, we may coin a new word, prolengthened) discourse, or narration. However, in the context of this paper the word has the connotation of a particular type of literature or, better, a mass of traditional knowledge. In this sense, Purāṇa is first mentioned in the Atharvaveda, (XI. 7.24), where it says that, along with other things, the ṛc-s, sāman-s, chandas-es (ie.the metres), the Purāṇa and the yajus formulas were created from the principle called ucchiṣṭa ('that which remains'). At another place this Veda includes the Purāṇa in the list where other types of lore are mentioned, such as gāthā-s, nārāśamsī-s, and also itihāsa (XV.6.11,12). At this time, the nature of Purāṇa was not strictly defined yet, it was known as an important branch of knowledge. This is clear from the fact that, like other types mentioned above, Purāṇa is also included in the list of such types that are said to follow the Vrātya, wherever he went (AV XV. 6.11,12). The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (Śat. Br.) mentions Purāṇa (XI.5.6.8); and, in the context of the Pāriplava, the cycle of narrations to be recited daily at the Horse -sacrifice till the released horse came back after one year, various lores are prescribed to be recited for various tribes of men (XIII.4.3.2ff.). These are all common people, and it is prescribed that the king and the other people who gathered there should be entertained" with some purāṇa" (Ib. XIII.4.3.13 Kañ cit purāṇam ācakṣita). The reason for reciting a Purāṇa is as interesting as it

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is illuminating. It is said, that at this daily congregation, many persons would be coming together; and many of them might not know the Veda and the Vedic language. Among them, for one tribe, on a particular day, some Purāṇa was to be recited, as its special 'veda'. Here, the word used for the knowers of the Veda is *śrotriya*. Many in this assemblage would be *aśrotriya*. Hence the prescription of Purāṇa¹. This marks a clear difference, that the type of lore called Purāṇa was meant for the common masses. This difference between the elite and the common has been prevalent in all societies, and at all ages. Thus, we speak of King's English and the common English, the former being for the elite and those associated with the royal court. The case of the Sanskrit language is the same. Prākṛta is for the commoners, while Sanskṛt is for the elite, as the very names show. Hence, even the language of the extant Purāṇa texts shows a trend which, at many places, diverges from the Sanskṛt written, or spoken, according to the normative Pāṇinian rules formulated two thousand and more years ago. Though the language of the Purāṇas is not Prākṛta, as such, there is no doubt that this type of lore was meant for the commoners².

The point to be noted in this connection, i.e. of the relationship between the language of the *śrotriyas* and that of the other lores, including that of the Purāṇa, even in the ancient Vedic period, is that the *śrotriya*s could understand the language in which the other lores, including the Purāṇa, was recited. It could also be a language akin to the Vedic Sanskrit, though not strictly the Sanskrit of the Vedas. There is indication, that these lores were recited by the Hotṛ priest on the command of the Adhvaryu. This means that this language had become also of the commoners. Actually the *śrotriya* was the one who had the knowledge of Vedic language and could recite the *chandās*, in addition to his ability to speak and also understand the language of the common people. Like the Purāṇa, which had the connotation of 'the lore of the common people', *śrotra* denoted a class of lore (and Vedic lore, for that matter), which included Vedic louds, other verses and ritual-*mantras*. The Ṛgveda is

1. Purāṇa is prescribed for the people called here *vayāmsi* and others, i.e. Birds and bird-catchers.

However, looking to the later tradition, Purāṇa cannot be taken as restricted to them. The groups of people mentioned in this context have to be taken as governed by the termed '*aśrotriya*', mentioned above. Hence, all are common people.

2. For examples see Sindhu S. Dange, *Puranic Etymologies and Flexible Forms*, Viveka Publications, Aligarh, 1989; cf. p. 122 *vade*; p. 123 *aparādhm kṣama*; *tyajase*; p. 125 *uccarivā*; p. 131 *bumbārava*; p. 132 *khānapānaiś ca*; and a number of others.

clear about this concept of the *śrotra*, as is clear in the description of the car of Sūryā at her marriage, where its wheels are said to comprise the *śrotra* (RV X.85.11^c *śrotram te cakre āstām*)³. It should be noted that, the *śrotra* is differentiated from the *ṚC* and the *Sāman*, which are said to be tethers of the bullocks at the car (*Ib. ṛksāmābhyām abhihitau*), the bullocks being the (sun and the moon, as Sāyaṇa thinks). Thus, *śrotra*, as distinct from the *Ṛgveda* and other *Saṁhitās*, spoken of individually, is the whole class of Vedic lore, including the ritual. The one who knows the *śrotra* is the *śrotriya*. This word occurs first in the AV (IX. 6.37; X.2.20.21)., and got currency in the later literature. The Śat. Br., as we have noted above, makes a difference between the *śrotriya* and the commoner, and prescribes *Purāṇa* for the latter, which could also be understood by the *śrotriya*. This prescription is in view of the fact, that, on that day, the commoners came to attend the *Pāriplava*.

A finer analysis of the concept behind the word *purāṇa*, and of the nature of the lore called *Purāṇa*, is suggested by Yāska. He mentions other alternative words for *purāṇa*, such as *pratna*, *pradivas*, *pravayas* and so on; but, for the lore, known in his time as *Purāṇa*, he has an explanation which hints at the nature of *Purāṇa*. He asks, "*purāṇam kasmāt?*" and explains, "*purā navam bhavati*", i.e. the lore which is called *Purāṇa* is both *purā* and also *nava* (Nir. III. 19 *purā navam bhavati*). He further explains the word *nava*, by saying that it is 'brought forward' (*Ib. navam Kasmāt? ānitam bhavati*). That serves as the exact nature of the *Purāṇa*. It is brought forward in the tradition; and, it is ever new, in the sense that it is accepted by the later generations. In other words, it is considered as traditional belonging. The implication is that *Purāṇa* is as old as the *Veda* and also that it developed side by side with the *Veda*. This is why, the Śat. Br. (XIII. 4.3. 3ff) calls these lores, including *Purāṇa*, *Veda*. This shows the sanctity that they had acquired. Though it has been difficult to give a crisp and clear definition of the term *Purāṇa*, one has to accept, that Yāska's was the very first attempt to define it; and he did it splendidly. To put in the style we have been accustomed to, it would be: 'Purāṇa is ancient traditional knoweldge that assumes ever new gloss, being on par with the *Veda*, for the common people.' Having a broad base, and a common appeal, this type of lore gets getting fattened with new additions, together with new interpretations of the old events. Its one

3. Sāyaṇa takes the singular, *śrotram*, as *śrotre* (dual) to correspond to *abhihitau* (tied; cf. *abhidhānī*, which is a tying rope). This is not only unnecessary, but also spoils the concept, which is clear.

foot is in the Vedic lore, while the other touches new fields. The latter foot treads on contemporary ground, while the earlier one brings with it the vestiges of the past. It, thus, assumes the nature of a compendium of the old and the new, or Vedic and Popular new factors --- customs, manners, rites and so on. Here, the Purāṇa gets the status of Itihāsa. This is the reason, why at many places, Itihāsa and Purāṇa are spoken of together. The nature of the Purāṇa as a social compendium, in course of time, gave it the status of not only a *vidyāsthāna* but also of a *dharmasthāna*⁴. Kauṭilya, the date of whose Arthaśāstra more or less concurs with that of the Manusmṛti, ordains that a king should regularly, and daily in the afternoon, hear the Purāṇa and the Itihāsa (Artha-S. I.5.14). He also mentions the *paurāṇika*, who, he says, is the *sūta* or the *māgadha* (Ib. III. 7.29). The indication is, that he was specially employed by the king to acquaint him with popular code of conduct and tales about the same, from the past. Here the *paurāṇika* is said to be the son of a mixed union (*paurāṇikastv-anyaḥ, sūto māgadhas ca; brahmaḥṣatrād viśeṣaḥ*), and a *sūta* or a *māgadha*. However, at another place (Ib. V.3.13), he is differentiated from the *sūta* and the *māgadha* (cf. *kārtāntika-naimittika-mauhūrtika-Paurāṇika-sūtamāgadhaḥ*)⁵. The first context is of the type of sons, i.e. *pratiloma*; the second is of appointments of officers and servants (*bhṛtya-bharaṇīyam*). Even when the duty of the *paurāṇika* is stipulated, it is not clear, from these references, whether there were more than one Purāṇas. All that is clear is, that there could have been (and this is very probable) a number of floating accounts which went by the general name 'purāṇa'. This gets support from the mention of *purāṇāni* even prior to the Christian era (cf. Manusmṛti III. 232; Mahābhārata, Strī 13.2), not to speak about the Yājñavalkya-smṛti (III. 189) of the 3rd- 4th cent. A.D. The Mahābh. (Svargārohaṇa, 5. 46-47) mentions the number of the Purāṇas as eighteen (*aṣṭādaśa-purāṇāni*). But their names are not yet mentioned. Even in the absence of any specific names in the texts mentioned above, it is/not difficult to accept the statement, that " At least some of the extant purāṇas were composed in the first centuries of the Christian era".⁶ This implies that, prior to the Christian era, the extant Purāṇas were not known; also, they were not specified as such. Before we take up the point about the Purāṇa being a *śāstra*, we shall do well to see

4. Yājñavalkya-smṛti I. 3 *sthānāni vidyānām dharmasya ca*.

5. Whether we have to understand *paurāṇika* here as an epithet of *sūtamāgadha* is unclear. There is another paper in this Seminar by Mrs. S. S. Dange, on this topic.

6. *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol. III, Pt II, Poona (second ed.), 1973, p. 872.

how the spread of Puranic texts was worked out. When Purāṇas came to be classed on the names of various deities, the stage of oral transmission was already over; and these texts came to be written. It seems, rather, improbable that, at the stage of oral communication or recitation of the Purāṇas, the expanse of these texts was very large. But, when they came to be written down, their spread was brought about with a unique method. This was also the stage when the deity of the Purāṇa was believed to be present in the Purāṇa. At this stage, it came to be faithfully believed that, by copying a Purāṇa manuscript the deity of the Purāṇa was pleased and virtue was gained. The common method was to copy the whole, or part of a Purāṇa and gift it to a brāhmaṇa. It could also be kept in a temple. Various Purāṇa manuscripts, this way, came to be copied, and for various purposes. The gift of the Purāṇa, or keeping a manuscript thereof, came to be believed to ward off untimely death, atone for sins committed, and what not! Regular assemblages for the reading, and hearing, of the Purāṇas were arranged. The most popular such reading was of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. The cycle of such reading, generally, comprised seven days (called *saptāha*, which term is current even today). For such *saptāha*-s arrangements were elaborately made; and the persons attending them were housed in temporarily structured sheds or tents. They had to follow strict rules during this period. They had to observe celibacy; they had to sleep on the ground, and take food in plates made of leaves (Padma P. Uttarakhaṇḍa 194. 47 *brahmacaryam adhaḥ-suptiḥ patrāvālyām ca bhojanam*). Even the *Purāṇika* had to serve strict rules, being ready before sun-rise. The reading had to start exactly at sun-rise. His seat was on a higher level than the audience. He faced the north, while the audience faced the east. The session went on till the third part of the day, with short break at mid-day for taking food. The *purāṇika* was called Vyāsa, and was not to bow down to anybody once he assumed the seat. He was also to be a brāhmaṇa by birth./by his side there was to be a helper. He was also to be learned, able to satisfy the audience in case somebody had any doubt about any detail in the narration (*Ib.* 25 *paṇḍitaḥ saṁśaya-chettā lokabodhana-tatparaḥ*). The change of the caste of the *paurāṇika* from the earlier times to that of the *purāṇika*⁷ of the period, when the Purāṇa texts were written down, and were classified according to the deities and on other principles, has to be noted. Interesting

7. It appears that when Kauṭilya speaks of a *paurāṇika*, it indicates the post. It was his duty to study the current lore and also to gather it and commit it to memory. The *purāṇika*, of the later period, was to read the manuscripts collected and copied.

details of the retribution for breaking the restrictions on the part of the audience appear. It is said, that a person chewing betel leaves while hearing the Purāṇa would go to hell, after death, and would be made to eat the excreta of a dog (Skandapurāṇa II. 1.27. 47)⁸. It was also ordained that, while the Purāṇa session went on, none should wear his turban on the head, for fear of getting born with the brain of just a child for the whole of the next birth.

THE ŚĀSTRA:

The first, and the foremost, point to be sorted out is: in what way is the Purāṇa (a class-name for all the Purāṇas) a *śāstra*? According to the ancient tradition, Purāṇa is the Veda, as we have seen (cf. the context of the Pāriplava, noted above); and even the Puranic tradition calls it Veda, i.e. the fifth Veda⁹. This is because this lore comprises traditional knowledge. In common usage, Veda is differentiated from *śāstra* in such an expression as *veda-śāstra-sampanna*, which hints at a person who is well-versed in both Veda and the *śātra*. However, Veda, in one of its aspects, is a *śāstra*. The Saṁhitā portion is, in essence, Veda, while the Brāhmaṇa portion, which forms part of the general mass known as Veda (cf. *mantra-brāhmaṇa-yor veda-nāmadheyam*), is the *śāstra*, though it is not so said. The reason is, that the Brāhmaṇa texts contain injunctions, to a large extent, regarding sacrifice. The Śrautasūtras take a further step in this direction and this completes the concept of *śāstra*, which, in this case, concerns sacrifice. The Purāṇa lore assumes the status of a *śāstra* because it teaches many things. We have no idea of what the nature of the lore called Purāṇa was prior to the extant texts were available (ie. from about the fourth century A.D.); but, there is reason to believe that it gave important advice on many items of social and personal needs. The necessity for a king to listen to the Purāṇa, as enjoined by the Arthaśāstra, is an indication to this effect. In the later times, when the Purāṇas were specifically grouped, they, not only contained many topics from the older tradition of the Veda but, also recorded many beliefs, customs, practices and myths. This gave them a full status of a *śāstra*; because, they got the status of Dharmaśāstra.¹⁰ Advice, guidance and hints about religious and social matters, with suitable examples from older and new myths and

8. For this information see Sadashiv A. Dange, *Encyclopaedia of Puranic Beliefs and Practices*, Navrang, New Delhi, Vol. 1989, pp. 1134-1140.

9. Skandapurāṇa (VII. 1.2.90) says that the Purāṇa is not only not inferior to the Veda, but that it is the fifth Veda (*Ib.* V. 3.1. 18).

10. See not 4 above

legends, formed their main nature. In fact, as these various items taught and guided (*śās*), in the form of a bulk compendium, the Purāṇas could rightly be called *śāstra*. The process had already started from the Mahābhārata, which contains such items. In that sense, it could very well be termed *śāstra*, though it is termed Itihāsa.¹¹ In the real sense of the term, Itihāsa is not only 'history' in the present restricted connotation attached to it. It is a record of things as they were (*iti ha āsa*), i.e. 'this way it was', including not only lineage of kings and descriptions of war and coronations but also information of past rites, code of conduct and sacrifices. That is why, in the ancient texts, Purāṇa was often mentioned with Itihāsa, as if both formed a single whole. In the stage of further codification and this is the stage of a perfect scientific approach with the connotation of *śāstra* as a scientific treatise, Purāṇas came to be characterised with the famous *pañca-lakṣaṇa* motif. The scientific codification is marked also in the classification of the extant Purāṇas as Sāttvika, Rājasa and Tāmāsa. In the Purāṇas termed Sāttvika Hari (Viṣṇu), the greatness of whom is extolled, is the chief deity. In those termed Rājasa Brahmā is extolled more; and in those termed Tāmāsa the greatness of Agni and of Śiva is prominent (Matsya P. 53. 67ff.). There are some Purāṇas that are of a general (or mixed, *saṁkīrṇa*) nature, in which Sarasvatī and the manes are said to be extolled (*Ib.* 68). Howsoever arbitrary this classification may appear, it has a germ of scientific method of identifying the contents of the various Purāṇa texts. As such, this and such other efforts at grouping and classifying indicate that these texts got getting scientific in the modern sense of the term. Thus, the Purāṇas, in their present form, hold the double status of *śāstra*: (i) Books that preach, teach, advise, instruct and provide injunctions on a number of topics; and (II) Books that studied and classified the collected information in various ways. This will be clear from the topics covered by them. It is difficult to give here a whole, and concise, list of the topics; it is also not necessary. But, a general idea could be had from the following: There are topics that go under Dharmaśāstra, such as adoption, adultery, Āśrama, Dharma, initiation (*dīkṣā*), king and kingship, ordeals, taboos, vows and the like. These cover the three main phases of Dharmaśāstra, viz. *ācāra*, *vyavahāra* and *Prāyaścitta*. There are instructions on building of temples and other buildings, of tanks and the rituals connected with them; on stars and planets; on Horticulture and Agriculture; on diseases and medicines;

11. Mahābhārata Ādi, I. 19 *bhāratasyetiḥāsasya*.

on the use of metals; on poetics; on the interpretation of dreams and other such topics of social importance and relevance.

An important phase of the Purāṇas is what is called mythology in modern times. In the Purāṇa texts this is covered by *sarga* and *pratisarga* from the *pañcalakṣaṇa* motif, i.e. creation and counter, or subsidiary, creation, wherein the modern concept of 'myth' holds good, though, however, the term myth has a wider scope. In *manvantara* (various eras) and *varṇśā* (genealogy), the Purāṇa leans more to history in its modern sense; and in *Varṇśā(śyā)nucarita*, the Purāṇa often mixes myth with history, the result being the formation of legends. We have seen how Yāska has explained the term *purāṇa* as *purā nava*, where he rightly takes *purā* as the base on which Purāṇa assumes the garb of traditionality. Various tales recorded by the Purāṇa texts, which are called 'myth', have to be termed *purā-kathā* (and not *purāṇa-kathā*, as is sometimes done) to keep to the original sense. Because, *purāṇa-kathā* would mean, simply, 'a tale from the Purāṇa'; and such a tale may be even a real tale, dry and factual, without the element of fancy and re-arrangement, which are characteristic of a myth (*purā-kathā*). Purāṇaśāstra, in this phase of the meaning of the term, is expected to contain interpretation of old tales (*kathās*), together with the collection of tales. In the former, i.e. interpretation, old tales will be presented in a new light requiring the context in which they are set and also the purpose for which they are employed. This would require additions and modifications. In modern times, this process is called 'charter'. By this method old myths (or *purā-kathās*) are presented with a re-arrangement. There are a number of such instances of old myths being used in a new situation. Their bulk is so great, and conspicuous, in the Puranic texts, that Purāṇas are identified with them. It is here that the Purāṇas are termed in the modern times by the general term 'Mythology', which has been taken to contain only stories of gods and demons, or such fanciful tales which were never true. This is doing injustice to the nature of the Purāṇas; it also exposes the ignorance of those who do so ! The study of the Purāṇas, as a *śāstra*, cannot be profitable and worth its name without the study on a comparative basis. Single Purāṇa texts have been studied; but, study of a particular topic from all the Purāṇa texts is apt to reward the scholar and others, wherein a track of evolution of ideas and practices will show itself. A few examples would show what I propose. For example, *upanayana* is not allowed for a *sūdra*, as a general rule; and most Purāṇa texts follow the tradition handed down from the Vedic period. However, the Varāha Purāṇa allows it (ch. 127; also 128). After prescribing the attire for the initiates of other

varṇa-s, this text says that for the śūdra the covering skin should be of a black-goat; a staff of a bamboo measuring eight cubits; blue (or black, *nīla*) cloak and an umbrella also having black cloth. Interesting information about marriage obtains from the Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa. According to it, a girl might be allowed to have sexual intercourse with a person with the permission of her parents, even prior to the marriage. However, at marriage with the same person, the man has to be purified by a three-day fast (Brahmāṇḍa P. II. 4.8.17). Like the marriage of the Tulasī plant (as a bride) with Viṣṇu, which is referred to by the Purāṇas generally, the Skandā P. (IV. 259.62) recommends the regular marriage of a black bull. Devoid of the motif of marriage, Tulasī appears as the symbol of the vegetation spirit; and the bull symbolizes all males here. Such other symbols are strewn in the Puranic literature, another being the *bilva* or the *śrī-phala*. An interesting myth (*purā-kathā*) occurs about Kandalī, which is a plant and is also anthropomorphosed as the daughter of the sage Aurva born from his knee, and was married to no less a sage than the haughty Durvāsas. Durvāsas showed his real nature and cursed her to be a heap of ashes,¹² when she used her tongue, sharp as a razor, as was her nature, to injure the feelings of people. On the compassion of the seer she was, later, born as a plant of that name. To understand the implication of such mythical accounts, a transpuranic and transcultural study is necessary. For that, it is not enough to study material from only the Hindu context. One has to take help from works on the methods of the study of myths. Works like *Vedic Mythology* (A. A. Macdonell) or *Epic Mythology* (E. W. Hopkins) and so on are preliminary and mostly of a documentative nature, in the face of modern trends of the study of myths, with the rise of such approaches as functionalism, structuralism and so on. It was pointed out by J. Gonda in his presidential address at the All India Oriental Conference 1978, Poona (*Proceedings*, 1980, p. 3) that in the study of myths (and, we may add, of mythology) new insights into the structure and function of myths in the archaic societies gained by scholars outside the field of Sanskrit did not seem to have attracted the attention they deserved. He, probably, hinted at taking note on the study of such scholars as Malinowski and Claude Levi Strauss. This statement, even at that time, was not exactly true, in view of efforts on similar lines by the present speaker (writer) right from 1969, which, unfortunately, did not come to the notice of Gonda, though the books were published by the

12. Dange, *Encl. P. B. P.* Vol. V, P. 1474 for Bilva anthropomorphosed as a young man.

Universities of Poona and Bombay, not to mention other publishers of repute. In any case, to study the Purāṇas as a śāstra, one has to take help from works on Dharmaśāstra, if the study concerns ancient Hindu law; and, to study them from the point of mythology, the study has to proceed on the socio-anthropological lines, with comparative material from such ancient stock as the Chinese, the middle eastern sources like the Assyro-Babylonian and even the pre-Columbus American, such as the Aztecs and the Mayans, and also the Incan. It is unrewarding just to stop at the sources from the Avestan and the Greek mythologies. One has not only to get acquainted with the works of Dumézil, Miernia Elied, Joseph Campbell and Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty who have studied myths from various angles but also of the structuralists. Myths have been taken as a form of language, as they have the value of communication prior to the development of language. As such, the study has to be supported by such observations. Then only will the study be *purā* and yet *nava*, to keep to spirit of the PURĀṆA.

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THE KARMAYOGA (PATH OF ACTION) IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF PURĀNĀS

By

RAGHUNATH GIRI

[अत्र पौराणिकदर्शने कर्मयोगस्य स्वरूपस्य विवेचनं प्रस्तुतम् । प्रथमतः कर्मयोगस्यार्थस्य विवेचनं पुराणानां दर्शनसंप्रदायानां श्रीमद्भागवद्गीतायाश्चाधारेण प्रस्तुतम् । तत्र सकाम-अकाम-निष्कामादिकर्मणां विभेदं विनिर्दिश्य शंकराचार्याणां न्यायसिद्धान्तस्य तिलकमाहाभागानामपि भतं प्रदर्शितम् । अनन्तरं पुराणानां स्मृतीनां टीकाग्रन्थानां चाधारेण कर्मणां धर्माणां वा स्वरूपं विनिर्दिष्टम् । अस्मिन् प्रसङ्गे वर्णधर्माणामाश्रमधर्माणां निमित्तधर्माणां गुणधर्माणां साधारणधर्माणां स्त्रीधर्माणां च विवेचनं कृतं वर्तते । अन्ततः शुभाशुभकर्मणां च विनिर्देशः कृतः ।]

When we begin to deal with Karma Yoga it seems necessary to mention a little about the sources of Karma, otherwise it seems difficult to answer the question, "What is Karma"? The Gītā hints, towards this difficulty¹ and states that only scriptures are the authority to indicate what should be done and what should not be done². Primarily only the Vedas were regarded as the sources of Dharma or Karma. Jaimini includes Smṛtis with certain condition in the sources of Dharma³. He classifies injunction of Smṛtis into three groups. In the first group he puts only those injunctions of Smṛtis, which agree with injunctions of the Vedas, and accepts their authenticity because they are regarded as the mere explanation of the Vedic ideas on the same issue. The second group consists of those injunctions, whose origin is not available in the Vedas and which do not contradict some of the injunction of the Vedas. These are also accepted as authentic on the interpretation that these are agreeable to the Vedas and as if their origin is lost. In third group those injunctions are put, which contradict the Vedic ideas, hence their authenticity is rejected⁴. The first smṛti writer Manu agrees with Jaimini in regarding the Vedas as the fundamental authority, but he does not stop there, he includes the Smṛtis, good conduct and finally the self satisfaction in the criteria to test the

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| 1. किं कर्म किमकर्मेति कवयोप्यत्र मोहिताः । | - गीता ; | 4, 16 |
| 2. तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं ते कार्याकार्यव्यवस्थितौ | - गीता | 16, 24 |
| 3. अपि वा कर्तृसमवायात् प्रमाणमनुमानं स्यात् | -जैमिनि सूत्र ; | 1 13 12 |
| 4. विरोधे त्वनपेक्ष्यम् स्यात् असति ह्यनुमानम् । | -जैमिनि सूत्र | 1 13 13 |

Dharmas⁵. Kullūka Bhaṭṭa, the commentator on the Manusmṛiti, refers to Hārīta's definition of Dharma as injunctions of the Vedas or Śruti, and explains that Śruti does not mean only the Vedas, but both the Vedās and the Tantras⁶. We see that the Śīva Purāṇa is very liberal in this respect. It accepts the first authenticity of the Vedas and states that Śīva Dharma mentioned in Āgamās and Śīva Purāṇa is also in conformity with the Vedās⁷. But this does not mean that it upholds the authenticity of the Vedas only. It suggests to keep faith in the authenticity of the Vedās, Vedāngas, Śāstras, Sāṅkhya, Vaiśeṣikas, Yogas, Naiyāyikas, Saura, Brāhmaṇas, Raudras and Vaiṣṇavas⁸. It also includes in the list the Kāmikas, the Śāivāgamas, the Śāiva Siddhāntas, the Pāśupata Śāivas, the Mahāvratadhara Śāivas, the Kāpālīka Śāivas⁹, and the Purāṇas¹⁰. It also agrees with Manu in giving more importance to good conduct or tradition, and explains that good conduct (sadācāra) means the conduct of those persons, who have regulated their life by the injunction of the Vedas, the Āgamās and the Smṛitis, and who have the āstikya buddhi, that is belief in the 'Law of Karma' and rebirth¹¹. It also accepts the two divisions of the Vedas, Karmakāṇḍa and Jñānakāṇḍa, and asserts that these two are not contradictory to each other. The Dharma which is expounded by karmakāṇḍa is lower Dharma, while the Dharma expounded by the Upaniṣads, is higher Dharma. These are not different or conflicting Dharmas but the two grades of the same Dharma, The lower Dharma is the means to obtain the higher Dharma¹². It further states that there is also the Śāivadharmā equal to the higher Dharma of the Upaniṣad. This Śāiva Dharma is mentioned and explained to some extent in the histories (Epics) and the Purāṇas and thoroughly described in Śāivāgamas which

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5. वेदः स्मृतिः सदाचारः स्वस्य च प्रियमात्मनः ।
एतच्चतुर्विधं प्राहुः साक्षाद् धर्मस्य लक्षणम् । -मनुस्मृति ; 2,6,21
6. श्रुतिश्च द्विविधा वैदिकी तान्त्रिकी च -मनुस्मृति (कु. भ.) 2, 1
7. शैवाख्यं शिवधर्मख्यं पुराणं श्रुतिसंमितम् -वा. सं. उ. खण्ड; 31, 165
8. वेदवेदांगतत्त्वज्ञाः सर्वशास्त्रविशारदाः । साख्यं वैशेषिकाश्चैव यौगा नैयायिकानतः ।
सौरा ब्राह्मणास्तथा रौद्रा वैष्णवाश्चापरे नराः । शिष्टाः सर्वे विशिष्टाश्च शिवशासनयन्त्रिताः ॥
-वा. सं. उ. खं. 31, 170-172
9. शैवाः सिद्धान्तभार्गस्थाः शैवाः पाशुपतास्थथा, शैवा महाव्रतधराः शैवाः कापालिकाः परे !
-वा. सं. उ. खंड; 31, 173-174
10. वेदधर्मं शास्त्रधर्मं स्मृतिधर्मं पुराणम् । -कोटिरुद्रसंहिता 20, 50
11. आचारः परमो धर्म आचारः परमं धनम्, आचारः परमा विद्या आचारः परमा गतिः ।
-वा. सं. उ. खं.; 14, 55, 60
12. परमोऽपरमश्चोभौ धर्मौ हि श्रुतिचोदितौ - वा. सं. पू. खं.; 32, 5, 8

are roughly classified under two groups. The first group consists of those Āgamas which are approved by the Vedas and the second group consists of those Āgamas which are not approved by the Vedas. The first group is regarded as the copy of the Vedas while the second is regarded as an independent authority. These independent Āgamas are divided, first in ten, and then in eighteen, kinds and are called by different names such as Kāmika, Kaula etc. But the Āgamas approved by Vedas are more than hundred thousand, and all deal with the supremacy of Śiva, His vows, knowledge etc. as their subject-matter¹³..

THE NATURE OF THE KARMA AND DHARMA

The Mīmāṃsakas, who advocate Karma as the path of the supreme goal, assert that sacrifices recommended and enjoined by the Vedas, are Karma, They mean by sacrifices, the offering of the oblation in fire, in different manners, on different occasions for different purposes. But the concept of sacrifices does not remain the same for successive thinkers and religious leaders. Manu includes four other kinds of deeds in sacrifices. And the sacrifices recommended by Mīmāṃsā remain one of the five great sacrifices. It is called Deva Yajña by Manu. There are four other kinds of sacrifices, namely Ṛṣiyajña, Pitṛyajña, Atithiyajña and bhūta yajña. Manu calls them five mahāyajñas and considers them of equal importance. But he does not close the list here, he keeps it open to include other deeds also in it. He himself gives the same status to physical and mental control, when he says that one can be able to satisfy God by offering speech as oblation in senses, by offering vital breaths as oblation in speech or by performing jñāna yajña¹⁴..

On the above direction of Manu, the Gītā mentions dravyayajña, Tapo Yajña, Yoga Yajña, Svādhyāya yajña and jñāna yajña in the list of yajñas¹⁵.. The Śivapurāṇa also follows the same tradition of the Gītā regarding the nature and kinds of yajña, which may be identified

13. शैवो यः परमो धर्मः श्रेष्ठानुष्ठानशब्दितः, इतिहासपुराणाभ्यां कथञ्चिदुपवृंहितः । शैवागमो हि द्विविधः श्रौताऽश्रौताश्च संस्कृतः । स्वतन्त्रो दशधा पूर्व तथाष्टादशधा पुनः ॥ कामिकादि..... । श्रुतिसारमयो यस्तु शतकोटिप्रवस्तिरः ! परं पाशुपतं यत्र व्रतं ज्ञानं च कथ्यते ।

—वा. सं. पू. खं.; 32, 9, 13

14. ऋषियज्ञं देवयज्ञं भूतयज्ञं च सर्वदा । नृयज्ञं पितृयज्ञं च यथाशक्तिर्न हापयेत् । ज्ञानेनैवापरे विप्रा यजन्त्येतेर्मखैः सदा ।

—म. स्मृ. ; 4, 21, 24

15. द्रव्ययज्ञास्तपोयज्ञा योगयज्ञास्तथा परे

स्वाध्यायज्ञानयज्ञाश्च यतयः संशितव्रताः ॥

—गीता; 4, 23

respectively with the five yajñas of the Gītā¹⁶. These five sacrifices are explained as follows : Karma yajña means all these sacrifices, which are performed with the heap of external materials such as butter, rice, fire etc. It includes all the sacrifices of the Mīmāṃsākās. Tapoyajña¹⁷. means the purification of the body by different vows (Vratas) such as Kṛcchra, candrāyaṇa etc. Japa yajña means the muttering of sacred syllable 'Om' and the five lettered Mantra and the study of Rudrāṣṭādhyāyī. Svādhyāya means the study of all the religious scriptures. Dhyāna yajña means meditation. (But the Vāyaviya Saṁhitā narrows its meaning to the meditation of God). Jñāna yajña means direct and intuitive knowledge acquired with the help of the Śaivāgamas¹⁸. In this wider sense of sacrifice Karma, Jñāna etc. are put together on equal status. The Gītā does not mention devotion in this context. But the Śiva Purāṇa asserts that these five sacrifices are Karma or Dharma, but they can become worship, or devotion provided they are performed with the motive to please Śiva¹⁹. Though the status of sacrifice is given to all yet all are not considered of equal importance. Both the Gītā and Rudra Saṁhitā accept that there is hierarchical grade in them. The first is of the lowest grade and the last is of the highest grade²⁰. It is not necessary for each and every person to complete these five sacrifices either simultaneously or successively. A person can choose one or the other according to his sweet will and ability. Therefore the persons of different classes perform one or the other sacrifice according to their capacity. All of them are on the right path, and may reach the final goal, sooner or later. These differ only in this respect that the followers of the path of the lower grade are further from their final goal than those who follow the path of the upper grade²¹.

16. कर्मयज्ञस्तपोयज्ञो जपयज्ञस्तदुत्तरः

ध्यानयज्ञो ज्ञानयज्ञश्च पंचयज्ञा प्रकीर्तिताः । वा. सं. उ. खं.; 22, 24

17. देवद्विजगुरुप्राज्ञपूजनं शौचमार्जवम् । ब्रह्मचर्यमहिंसा च शारीरं तप उच्यते ॥ अनुद्वेगकरं वाक्यं सत्यं प्रियं हितं च यत् । स्वाध्यायाभ्यसनं चैव वाङ्मयं तप उच्यते ॥ मनःप्रसादः सौम्यत्वं मौनमात्मविनिग्रहः । भावसंशुद्धिरित्येतत्तपो मानस उच्यते । उक्तं त्रिविधं तपः पुनः सात्त्विकराजसिकतामसिकभेदेन त्रिविधं विवेचितम् ।

गीता 17. 14-19

18. वा. सं. उ. खं. ; 10, 52-54

19. तपः कर्म जपो ध्यानं ज्ञानं चेत्यनुपूर्वशः ।

पंचधा कथ्यते सदिभस्तदेव भजनं पुनः ॥ -वा. सं. उ. खं.; 10, 48

20. गीता; 4,33; रु. सं. सू. खं. ; 12, 45, 46 श्रेयान्द्रव्यमयाद्यज्ञानयज्ञः परन्तप ।

21. कर्मयज्ञरताः केचित्तपोयज्ञरताः परे, जपयज्ञरताश्चान्ये ध्यानयज्ञरतास्तथा ॥ ज्ञानयज्ञरताश्चान्ये विशिष्टाश्चोत्तरः ।

-वा. सं. उ. खं. ; 22, 45, 46 ए

Manu has classified deeds into two groups, pravṛttakarma and Nivṛtta-Karma, on the basis of the presence and absence of the personal motives to guide the direction of Karmas. Pravṛtta Karmas are those Karmas which are performed with the motive to obtain pleasure in this world and in the heaven. Nivṛtta Karma means those Karmas which are performed with knowledge without personal motive. Thus the motive of Pravṛtta karma is the want of pleasure while the motive of Nivṛtta Karmas is the idea of liberation²². Rāmānuja also agrees with this view of Manu that Pravṛtta and Nivṛtta Karmās are performed respectively as the means of pleasure (Abhyudaya) and liberation²³ (Niḥśreyasa). On the same principle the Vāyaviya Saṁhitā classifies Karma into two groups, Sakāma and Akāma, and states that a person, who performs these sacrifices with personal motives, is undoubtedly attached with results and gets only the result of the Karma. The Karma does not give him any higher benefit. He enjoys the results of his Karmas²⁴. He may live in the heaven to enjoy the results of his good actions. But he is entitled to live there only for that period in which he enjoys and consumes the results of his virtuous Karma. As soon as his virtuous Karmas are exhausted, he is thrown down on the earth to sow and to reap again²⁵. But the person, who performs those sacrifices without any personal motive, obtains the results of his Karmas with some higher benefit. He does not stop in the heaven but goes higher than that. He lives in Rudra Loka and enjoys the results of his Karma. But this does not mean that he becomes entitled to live in Rudraloka for ever or enjoy liberation. He too lives there only for the period in which he enjoys and finishes his virtuous actions. As soon as his virtuous actions are exhausted, he falls on the earth from the Rudraloka. When we compare these two Karmas, Sakāma and Akāma, we see that these are similar in the enjoyments of their results and in the transitory and exhaustive nature of their results. But this does not mean that they are equal in all respects and their distinction has no importance. The Akāma Karma has its higher benefit, and therefore it is regarded as guide to Sakāma Karma. The person, who performs this Akāma Karma, is spiritually benefited. Though he falls after the exhaustion of his merit, yet he does not stand on the same level from which he had started. He gets

22. सुखाभ्युदयिकंचैव नैःश्रेयसिकमेव च,

प्रवृत्तं च निवृत्तं च द्विविधं कर्म वैदिकम् ।

—म. स्मृति; 12, 88

23. गीता ; 18, 30 रामानुज भाष्य ।

24. कर्मयज्ञो द्विधा प्रोक्तः कामाकामविभेदतः

—वा. सं. उ. खं.; 22, 46 बी-48ए

25. ते तं भुक्त्वा स्वर्गलोकं विशालं, क्षीणे पुण्ये मर्त्यलोकं विशन्ति - गीता; 9, 21

some special power or capacity to begin and perform the higher grade of sacrifices. When he falls after enjoying the results of his Karma Yajña, he is able to perform Tapo yajña. He gets not only the ability but tendency too to proceed towards higher paths. In this way he enjoys the results of Tapo Yajña and is able to perform Japa yajña. Similarly he performs Dhyāna yajña and Jñāna yajña in the course of time, and at last gets liberation. Thus it may be said that Karma also is a means of liberation. Though it is not a direct means of liberation, yet it is not a wrong path; it certainly leads towards liberation²⁶. This Akāma Karma of the Vāyaviya Saṁhitā is similar to Kalyāṇa of the Gīta, for which it is stated that a person, who perform the Kalyāṇa Karma, gets the tendency to go higher and he is able, though after a thousand births, to get liberation²⁷.

Now we take to discuss the traditional view that Karma is the source of bondage and Jñāna, is the means of liberation²⁸. It is repeatedly stated that one is necessarily and compulsorily bound to enjoy the good or bad results of his good and evil Karma²⁹. In this process of enjoyment the Karmas are divided into three groups viz. Sañcita, prārabdha and Kṛyamāṇa. Sañcita Karma means the collected impression of the Karmas, which are performed in various past lives from time immemorial. Prārabdha Karma is that impression of Karma whose enjoyment has begun but has not yet been exhausted. And Kriyamāṇa Karma is that Karma, which is performed in the present life³⁰. Thus it seems that a person will never get rid of the results of his Karma. Thus the stock of sañcita karma increases more and more in successive lives and only a small part of that is enjoyed. And without enjoyment the Karma will never be exhausted. In such a case Karma will be the source of bondage, it can never make one able to get liberation. This traditional assumption creates a problem before those who advocate Karma as a means of liberation either directly or indirectly.

Those who do not regard Karma as a means of liberation agree with this traditional view in its apparent sense. But the advocates of Karma

26. तपस्वी च पुनः तस्मिन्भोगान् भुक्त्वा ततश्च्युतः

तस्मान्मुक्तो शिवाज्ञापः कर्मयज्ञोऽपि देहिनाम् ।

- वा. सं. उ. खं. ; 22, 48 बी - 50

27. अनेकजन्मसंसिद्धस्ततो याति परां गतिम् ,

- गीता ; 6, 40-45

28. कर्मणा बध्यते जन्तुर्विद्यया तु विमुच्यते ।

-म. भा. शां. प. ; 240, 7

29. अवश्यमेव भोक्तव्यं कृतं कर्म शुभाशुभम्
4 बी

-को. रु. सं.; 23, 39 बी; उ. सं; 7,

30. कर्म च त्रिविधं प्रोक्तम्

संचितं क्रियमाणं च प्रारब्धं चेति बन्धकृत्

-को. रु. सं.; 23, 42, 44

plead that Karma in itself is not the source of bondage. If it is regarded as the source of bondage, on the one hand liberation would be impossible and on the other hand all the scriptures, which recommend Karmas, would be futile and useless. The Vāyaviya Saṁhitā clarifies that the seed of bondage is not present in the nature of Karmas. It lies in the desire of the agent and in his attachment to the results of the Karmas. When a person performs a Karma with the motive to get certain results, a psychological change takes place in his mind, and in the process of his performance, he becomes attached to the results of the Karmas. This seed of bondage originates in and adheres to the desire of the agent. It appears in the Karmas and hence Karmas are regarded as the source of bondage. But if Karmas are performed without any personal motive, or only for the sake of duty, the seed of bondage would not germinate, and that Karma would not be the source of bondage³¹. Manu also approves the same in other words. He says that the seed of Karma lies in the vision (darśana) of the agent. This vision may be proper or improper. Proper vision produce the seed of liberation in Karma, while improper vision begets the seed of bondage in it. Thus a person, who performs Karma with proper vision (Samyak Darśana), does not fall in bondage. By proper vision be means the proper knowledge of circumstances, environment, desirelessness of the agent and the duty or responsibility of the agent, by which he is compelled to perform certain actions. But a person, who has not this proper vision, performs Karma, and falls in bondage³².

Thinkers like Ācārya Śankara, who accepts the traditional view that Karma is the cause of bondage in its apparent sense, suggest the renunciation of all Karmas, because in the presence of Karma liberation is not possible. It is self-contradictory to say that Karma, which is the source of bondage, can liberate the agent. He emphasizes the complete renunciation of all Karmas. But the Gitā, which takes the word Karma in a wider sense, asserts that complete renunciation of Karma is not possible. None can remain for a moment without action³³. When we have body and mind and live in the world, we are forced by the guṇas of Prakṛti to do one or another action. Then it is not possible for us to get rid of bondage if karma is in itself, the source of bondage. The Gitā agrees with

31. फलकामनया कर्म करणात्प्रतिबध्यते
न कर्ममात्रकरणात्तस्मात्कर्मफलं त्यजेत् ।

-वा. सं. उ. खं. ; 10, 42

32. सम्यग्दर्शनसम्पन्नः कर्मभिनं निबध्यते
दर्शनेन विहीनस्तु संसारं प्रतिपद्यते

-म. स्मृति; 6, 74

33. न हि कश्चित्क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत्

-गीता; 3, 5

the view of the Vāyavīya Saṁhitā that desire and attachment of the agent is the seed of bondage in Karma. Hence it is neither possible nor necessary to renounce the Karmas. The personal motive, desire of the results and attachment to the result, should be renounced.³⁴ But the renunciation of desire does not mean a formal declaration of desirelessness. It should arise from the deep heart of the agent. It is not an easy task which can be done by every one. According to Tilak it is possible only after the realization of the supreme being or after attainment of supreme knowledge.³⁵ Manu votes in favour of self-effort and selfpractice. He says that gradually by practice it is possible to acquire the power to renounce the desire of results.³⁶

We have explained the views of the advocates of Karma and their suggestion to renounce desire of the fruits. But when this point is considered deeply, it appears that the two division of Karmas namely Sakāma and Akāma, are not logical divisions. If karma means all movements, it can be classified in two heads, voluntary and non-voluntary. The non-voluntary actions, like breathing and pulsation, are possible without any desire. But when voluntary actions are taken for consideration, these can not be performed without desire. Naiyāyikas assert that the knowledge of iṣṭasāadhanatva (as the means of fulfilling desire), knowledge of balavadaniṣṭānanubandhitva (not the source of some great danger) and knowledge of kṛtisādhyatva (the capacity to perform), are the directive principles in the agent to motivate him towards a certain action. Among these three the first iṣṭasāadhanatvajñāna, is nothing but a personal motive, desire of a person to gain some thing by that particular action.³⁷ Manu also asserts the presence of personal motives in all Vedic Karmas.³⁸ Thus as a principle it should be regarded that voluntary action is not possible without personal motive.

In the presence of such a principle, Akāma Karma, voluntary action without personal motives, becomes a self-contradictory statement. Moreover, there would be the other difficulty of the selection of Karma. A

34. संगं त्यक्त्वा फलं चैव स त्यागो सात्त्विको मतः -गीता; 18, 9

35. कर्मयोग शास्त्र; पृ. 369-372

36. अनेन विधिना सर्वान् त्यक्त्वा संगञ्छनैः शनैः सर्वद्वन्द्वविनिर्मुक्तो ब्रह्मण्येवातिष्ठते । -म. स्मृति; 6, 81

37. चिकीर्षा कृतिसाध्येष्टसाधनत्वमतिस्तथा उपादानस्य चाध्यक्षं प्रवृत्तौ जनकं भवेत् । -न्या. सि. मु.; 150-151.

38. कामात्मता न प्रशस्ता न चै चेहास्थकामता काम्यो हि वेदाधिगमः कर्मयोगश्च वैदिकः । -म. स्मृति. ; 2, 2

person selects one or another Karma, because he wants to get certain thing as a result of that Karma. This is not possible if he desires nothing to get from his action. The Gītā tries to remove the former difficulty by explaining the meaning of the absence of personal motive. It states that the absence of personal motive does not mean desirelessness. The psychological difficulty or self-contradiction in voluntary action without personal motive arises only when we assert that the person should be free from all desire or he should be free from desire of the results in all senses. But the absence of personal motive means the absence of selfishness. This selfishness or self-interest of the agent makes him overjoyed when his attempts become successful, and full of despair in the case of failure. The Gītā suggests the widening of the motive in order to be free from the results of Karma. This means that Karma should be performed for the benefit of society or for consolidation of society instead of being performed for personal motive or self-interest. Lord Kṛṣṇa mentions himself as an example of the doer without selfish motive.³⁹ In this way a person may be able to perform voluntary action without selfish motive. The Gītā suggests the other way also to remove the above difficulty of Akāma Karma. It states that when a person performs an action for the worship of God and regards himself as the agent of God, on the one hand he becomes able to perform Karma properly, and on the other hand he gets freedom from his personal motive.⁴⁰ The Śiva purāṇa also agrees with the Gītā that the Karma should not be performed with mere personal motives. It should be performed either for consolidation or for benefit of society⁴¹ or for the worship of Śiva.⁴²

This interpretation of Akāma Karma differs from the Niṣkāma Karma, interpreted by Tilak in his commentary on the Gītā. According to Tilak, Niṣkāma Karma is a direct means of liberation. It can be a substitute or alternative path of Jñāna Yoga. But Niṣkāma Karma is possible only when real knowledge is obtained. Only the enlightened one can be a Niṣkāma Karma Yogi.⁴³ But according to the Śiva purāṇa both Sakāma and Akāma Karmas are enjoined only for those who have not obtained the supreme knowledge. They are not entitled to renounce their

39. कुर्यादिद्वांस्तथासक्तश्चिकीर्षुर्लोकसंग्रहम्

40. स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः

41. लोकोपकार करणे विचरन्तीह साधवः ।

42. शिवादेशकृतं कर्म प्रसादजनकं भवेत्
खं.; 12,

43. तिलक, गीता रहस्य, पृ. 372

-गीता; 3, 20-25

-गीता; 18, 46

-कै. सं.; 17, 45 बी

-विं. सं. ; 18, 14; रू. सं. सू.
43; वा. सं. उ. खं. ; 10, 43 ए

Karma. They have to perform their Karmas till the real knowledge dawns in them. ⁴⁴ It is emphatically stated that there is no injunction, prohibition or worship for those who have directly realized the nature of supreme reality by the grace of Śiva. Such Jñānis become free from all limitations, injunctions and prohibition. Like Śiva they become free from all desire. Nothing remains unachieved or as a goal for them. ⁴⁵ The Gītā also support this view that there is no injunction, prohibition etc. for enlightened ones. ⁴⁶ It is also regarded that Akāma Karma is not a direct means of liberation.

The Bhāgavatapurāṇa suggests a third way to get rid of the result of Karma by performing Karma. It maintains that without personal motive karma is not possible. But personal motive should not last for ever. It asserts that a doer performs action for the sake of enjoyment and gets that enjoyment. Sooner or later, this enjoyment of the results creates a feeling of satisfaction in the doer. This feeling of satisfaction finishes the longing for enjoyment. And this lack of the longing in the course of time creates detachment. The Bhāgavatapurāṇa compares mind with fertile land which becomes barren in the course of time owing to continuous ploughing and sowing. Similarly the mind becomes tired by the sensual pleasure, enjoyed continuously for a long period. Then it gives them up and gets detachment, ⁴⁷ and lastly Karmas are also renounced. But the renunciation of Karma before dawning of detachment is very harmful. Hence Karma should be performed till detachment arises. It mentions the two opposite functions of Karma, and says that Karma, as a general rule, is regarded as the source of bondage and misery. but the same Karma being associated with discriminative knowledge becomes the cause of destruction of bondage and removal of misery like clarified butter, which is the cause of diarrhoea, but being associated with other things becomes the medicine to cure the same disease. ⁴⁸ Thus karma is double ended, it leads towards bondage as one end, and leads towards liberation as other

44. इतिज्ञानं समुत्पन्नं यावन्नैव नरस्य वै
तावच्च कर्मणा देवं शिवमाराधेयन्नरः ।

- रु. सं. सू. खं.; 12, 58

45. नास्ति कृत्यमकृत्यं च समाधिर्वा परायणम्
न विधिर्न निषेधश्च तेषां मम यथा तथा ।

- वा. सं. उ. खं.; 11, 30-31

46. तस्य कार्यं न विद्यते.....

-गीता; 3, 17, 18

47. एवं कामाशयं चित्तं कामानामतिसेवया
विरज्येत यथा राजन्निवक्त्रामविन्दुभिः ।

-श्री. मा. पु.; 7, 11, 33, 34

48. एवं नृणां क्रियायोगाः सर्वे संसृतिहेतवः
त एव आत्मविनाशाय कल्पन्ते कल्पिताः परे

-श्री भा. पु. ; 1, 5, 33, 34

end, The use of karma towards one or the other end depends upon the determination and free will of the doer. ⁴⁹

The Śiva purāṇa also states like Bhāgavata purāṇa that continuous enjoyment creates detachment in the mind of the doer. But it does not accept that all the enjoyments (Bhoga) would lead toward detachment. According to the Śiva purāṇa enjoyment is obtained by artha, earned either by dhārmika means or by adhārmika means. The former leads towards detachment but the latter leads towards attachment. The Bhāgavata gives importance to the determination of the doer while Śiva purāṇa makes the means of earning artha responsible for one or the other end of Karma. ⁵⁰

CLASSIFICATION OF DHARMA OR KARMA.

The Śiva purāṇa divides karma into many groups on different principles. Though these classifications are not systematic and logical, yet they are sufficient to show the liberal and synthetic outlook of the Purāṇas. The Vāyaviya Saṁhitā mentions Śiva Sanātana Dharma with its four constituent parts viz. knowledge (Jnāna), action (Kriyā), worship (caryā) and meditation Yoga, and explains then as follows; knowledge means the discriminative knowledge of paśu, pāśa and pati. Kriyā is the purification of the six paths (saḍadhvā) in accordance with the instruction of the Guru. Worship means the performance of all the karmas, according to the Varṇa and Āśrama of the person, with intention to please Śiva. And Yoga means the fixation of mind on Śiva after suppressing all the other tendencies of the mind. ⁵¹ The Vidyeśvara Saṁhitā divides Dharma in the following ways. First it divided Dharma into two classes (1) Those karmas, which are performed with the help of materials like sacrifices, are called dravya dharma; (ii) and those Karmas, which are performed with the help of the body such as piligrimage, penance etc. are called dehadharma. ⁵² It again divides Karmas according to their importance in the four yugas. It recommends meditation for Kṛtayuga,

49. य एवं कर्म नियतं विद्वान् कुर्वीत मानवः.....

.....न स लिप्यते ।

अन्यथा कर्म कुर्वाणो मानारूढो निबध्यते

-श्री. भा. पु.; 4, 26, 7-8

50. धर्मादर्थोऽर्थतो भोगो भोगाद्वैराग्यसंभवः ।

धर्माजितार्थभोगेन वैराग्यमुपजायते ।

विपरीतार्थभोगेन राग एव प्रवर्तते ।

-वि. सं. ; 13, 51, 52 ए

51. वा. सं. उ. खं.; 10, 30-33

52. धर्मश्च द्विविधः प्रोक्तो द्रव्यदेहद्वयेन च ।

द्रव्यमिज्यादिरूपं तीर्थस्नानादिदैहिकम् ।

-वि. सं. ; 13, 52 बी; 53 ए

penance for Tretā yuga, sacrifices for Dvāpara yuga, and worship for Kali yuga.⁵³ It again divides dharma as Mahisadharmā and Vṛṣabha dharma, and includes untruth, unholiness, cruelty, violence, faithlessness, unbalanced wealth, company of bad persons, insatiable desires, anger etc. in the former group⁵⁴ and celibacy, truthfulness, non-violence, kindness, forgiveness, control over senses and mind etc. in the latter group.⁵⁵

Vijñāneśvara, the famous commentator on Yajñavalkya smṛti, classifies the moral duties into six heads in the commentary namely Mitākṣarā viz. (i) Varṇa dharma, (ii) Āśrama dharma, (iii) Varṇāśrama dharma, (iv) Guṇa dharma, (v) Nimitta dharma and (vi) Sādhāraṇa dharma.⁵⁶ But the Purāṇas do not describe all these six. They describe only three dharmas the first, second and sixth out of these six dharmas.

Varṇa dharma :—

Duties enjoined on the persons of the four classes, are called Varṇa dharma. The different duties and responsibility of society are imposed upon the persons of these classes for the benefit of society as well as for their own progress in society. It would not be proper to give a detailed account of all these duties mentioned in the Purāṇas, we describe in brief some of the duties of each Varṇa for illustration.

Viṣṇupurāṇa recommends the following duties for Brāhmaṇas; namely donation, sacrifice, study, offering oblations to fore-fathers, preserving fire for daily sacrifices, presiding over ceremonies, teaching etc.⁵⁷ The Vāyaviya Saṁhitā adds some special duties in the above list such as forgiveness, peace, satisfaction, truthfulness, nonstealing, celibacy, knowledge, detachment etc.⁵⁸

The duties recommended for the Kṣatriya are as follows: protection of the nation from inner and outer enemies, protection of life and property of all the three Varṇas, study of the Vedas, teaching, performance of sacrifices, being priest for sacrifices, non-acceptance of donation, and killing viz. furious birds, animals and wicked persons etc.⁵⁹

53. कृते ध्यानाज्ज्ञानसिद्धिस्त्रेतायां तपसा तथा ।

द्वारे यजनाज्ज्ञानं प्रतिमापूजया कलौ ।

-वि. सं. ; 13, 55

54. माहिषं धर्ममास्थाय सर्वान्कालेन युञ्जति

असत्यश्चाशुचिश्चैव हिंसा चैवाथ निर्धृणा ।

-वि. सं. 17, 66-67

55. तद्दुर्ध्वं वृषमो धर्मो ब्रह्मचर्यस्वरूप धृक् ।

तांक्रियां वृषभधर्मो कालातीतोऽधिपतिष्ठति ।

-वि. सं. ; 17, 85-87

56. याज्ञवल्क्य स्मृति, मिताक्षरा - प्रथम श्लोक ।

57. दानं दद्यात् यजेद्देवान्यज्ञैस्स्वाध्यायतत्परः

- वि. पु. ; 3, 8, 21-25

58. वा. सं. उ. खं.; 11, 85-10 ए ; गीता ; 18, 42

59. वा. सं. उ. खं.; 11, 12-16 ए ; वि. पु. 3, 8, 26-28 ; गीता ; 18, 43

The duties of Vaiśya are recommended as follows: cultivation of land, protection of animals, trade, study of the Vedas, donation, performance of nitya and naimittika karmas.⁶⁰

The following duties are recommended for Śūdras: Service of the three varṇas, planting, assisting in the karma of other varṇas, sacrifices without mantra, non-stealing, donation, cooking, offering oblation to fore-fathers etc⁶¹.

The Vāyavīya Saṁhitā recommends some common duties for the upper three Varṇas, such as, taking bath thrice in a day, offering oblation in fire, worship of linga, donation, mobility, kindness, truthfulness, satisfaction, faith in God, non-violence, modesty, study, meditation, teaching, delivering lectures on religious and social subjects, penance, forgiveness, purity of body and mind etc⁶².

Āśrama dharma :-

As the society is divided into the above mentioned four classes for proper and balanced progress of human life in society, so the life of an individual is also divided into four successive parts for proper growth of the individual and for balanced progress of society. This division is based on the presupposition of a hundred-year span of human life, and each successive part lasts for twenty-five years. These four parts of individual life are called four āśramās, namely Brahmacharya, Gṛhastha, Vānaprastha and Saṁnyāsa. Among these four, the first two are beneficial for the growth of the individual and for the sake of worldly pleasure, while the last two are beneficial for the progress of society and for the preparation to achieve the supreme goal (liberation).

Brahmacharya :-

This Āśrama consists of the first 25 years of life. This is a life building āśrama. Here a person attempts to strengthen his body and mind so that he may make himself fit for the physical, social, mental and spiritual needs of his future life. The duties recommended for this āśrama are as follows : to live with the teacher, to be attentive towards his teaching, purity, good conduct, vows, service of the teacher, study of the Vedas, performance of

60. वा. सं. उ. खं.; 11, 16 एच; गीता; 18, 44ए - कृषिगौरक्षवाणिज्यं वैश्यकर्म स्वभावजम् वि. पु. ; 3, 8, 30, 31

61. वि. सं.; 13, 6; गीता; 18, 44 बी - परिचर्यात्कर्म कर्म शूद्रस्यापि स्वभावजम् । वि. पु.; 3, 8, 32-35; वा. सं. उ. खं. 11, 17

62. वा. सं. उ. खं.; 11, 1-8; वि. पु. 3, , 36-37- दया समस्तभूतेषु तितिक्षा नातिमानिता सत्यं शौचमनायासो मंगलं प्रियवादिता भैक्ष्यस्पृहा..... सामान्यवर्णानां कथिता गुणाः ।

daily sandhyās, offering oblation to fore fathers, respect for teachers, and obedience of the order of the teacher, living on alms, etc⁶³ .

Gṛhastha :-

This is the second āśrama; it consists of the second 25 years of life. This is a period of hard work, to earn money by proper means, and enjoy it properly. This āśrama is a support for the other āśramas⁶⁴ . This āśrama is to satisfy and to gratify all. In this āśrama, the householders satisfy fore-fathers with piṇḍa and tarpaṇa, gods with sacrifices, guests with food, sages with study, progenitor with children, living beings with grains and the whole world with kindness. The chief duties of the householder are : to serve the guest, to earn money, to offer oblations to Gods, sages and fore-fathers and to cohabit with his wife on proper occasion⁶⁵ .

Vānaprastha :-

This āśrama consists of the third 25 years of life. This is a preparation for the fourth āśrama, which leads towards the final goal. This is a period for practising detachment. The householder enters in this āśrama either with his wife or alone, he lives upon leaves, fruits, roots, etc and wears the bark of trees or skin of animals. He leads a life of austerity and penance. The duties recommended for him are bathing thrice a day, offering oblation in fire, worship, respect of guests, austerity, tolerance of heat and cold etc⁶⁶ .

Samnyāsa :-

This is the last 25 years of life. This is the path of spiritual progress and the means of liberation. It begins with the renunciation of attachment to money, children, wife etc. All the means of artha, Dharma and Kāma are renounced here. A Samnyāsī is expected to be friendly towards all beings. He should give up his desires, anger, pride and delusion for ever. He should extend fearlessness to all beings⁶⁷ . This means that he lives only for self-realization and wishes good to every being.

Varṇāśrama dharma :-

This is a strange Dharma which is neither pure Varṇa Dharma nor pure Āśrama dharma. The Karmas recommended or prohibited for Brāhmaṇas are called Varṇa dharma. Begging for Guru or bringing fuel

63. वि. पु. ; 3, 9, 1-6

64. वि. पु. छ 3, 9, 11-13

65. वि. पु. ; 3, 9, 7-17; 3, 11, 66-68 वात्सल्येनाविखिलं जगत् ।

66. वि. पु. ; 3, 9, 19-22

67. वि. पु. ; 3, 9, 24-31 अभयं सर्वभूतेभ्यो दत्त्वा यश्चरते मुनिः

तस्यापि सर्वभूतेभ्यो न भयं विद्यते क्वचित् ।

for him is a Āśrama dharma of 'Brahmacārī'. But to carry the stick of Palāśa is recommended only for a Brāhmaṇa Brahmacārins, hence it is called his varṇaśrama Dharma⁶⁸.

Nimitta Dharma :-

It connected with the renunciation of the enjoined karma and performance of prohibited karma. All the expiatory deeds come under this head⁶⁹. The Śiva Purāṇa regards Manu as the authority for all expiation but it gives more importance to the recollection of Śiva and remorse for deeds⁷⁰.

Guṇa Dharma :-

This depends upon some pre-condition. This is a pure conditional dharma. As the protection of subjects devolves upon a king after his coronation⁷¹.

Sādhāraṇa Dharma :-

It means those duties which are recommended for all without consideration of the Varṇa and the Āśrama. These are essential for the benefit of human life, society and mankind, and hence these are recommended for the men of all classes⁷². Manu mentions patience, forgiveness, control of mind, non-stealing, purity, control of senses, intelligence, learning, truthfulness, and non-anger (Akrodha) as the common duties⁷³. Yājñavalkya mentions the above ten with slight variation. He replaces patience, intellect and learning with non-violence, kindness and donation⁷⁴. The Śiva Purāṇa (Umā Samhitā) calls it dharmasthāna and includes the following karmas in it, namely bathing, worship, muttering of sacred mantras, oblation in fire, external cleanliness, internal purity, non-violence, vows, fasting, keeping silente, control of senses, intellect, truthfulness non-anger, donation, forgiveness, kindness, control of mind, building of tank, pond, well, and religious places performance of Kṛchra and Cāndrāyaṇa, pilgrimage etc⁷⁵.

68. मिताक्षरा ; 1, 1

69. मिताक्षरा ; 1, 1

70. वि. सं. 16, 28-30 प्रायश्चित्तानि कालेय मनुःस्वायम्भुवोऽब्रवीत्
कृते पापेऽनुतापोऽपि शिवसंस्मरणं परम् ।

71. मिताक्षरा ; 1, 1

72. मिताक्षरा ; 1, 1

73. म. स्मृ. ; 6, 92

74. य. सं. ; 1, 132

75. उ. सं. ; 20, 15 बी-18 ए

Dharmas for Women :-

The Vāyaviya Saṁhitā mentions some special duties for women. It divides women into two classes women whose husbands are alive and widows. For the former the service of the husband is the only duty. The other duties such as worship, vows etc. are secondary for them. But for the second group (widows) vows, donation, austerity, purity, sleeping on the ground, eating only in the night, celibacy, bathing with ashes or water, peace, keeping silent, forgiveness, remaining aloof from wicked persons, and to keep fast on the eighth, fourteenth and eleventh days of each fortnight are recommended as main duties⁷⁶.

Good and Evil Karma (Śubha and Aśubha Karma) :-

These two ethical concepts are not absolute but relative. They differ from society to society, time to time, place to place and situation to situation. Whatever is good in one society, at one time, in one condition for one person is evil for another society, another time, another situation and for another person. Here we do not discuss the psychological nature of these concepts logically. We merely take the views of Śiva Purāṇa in this respect and give a brief list of the names of good and evil Karmas. As a general rule honesty and regularity in the performance of one's own duties is regarded as good and negligence and dishonesty in performance of one's own duties is regarded as evil karmas. To be obedient towards one's own duties is regarded as the great Dharma and it is highly recommended for all⁷⁷. Disobedience to duties is strictly prohibited⁷⁸. These recommended duties are good for the person concerned. The proper performance of these duties leads one to heaven otherwise to hell⁷⁹. Though a long list of the names of hell is given, yet it is repeatedly explained that heaven and hell are the other names of virtue and sin (vices) respectively. Sin begets misery and virtue happiness⁸⁰.

Virtuous actions :-

Apart from the recommended duties the following in general are called virtuous actions :-

76. वा. सं. उ. खं. ; 11, 19, 23

77. रु. सं. सु. खं. ; 12, 68 - स्वजात्युक्तं तु यत्कर्म कर्तव्यं तदप्रयत्नतः ।

78. रु. सं. सु. खं. ; 12, 44 - यद्यज्जातिसमुद्दिष्टं तत्कर्म न लंघयेत्

79. उ. सं. ; 16, 24, 26

80. उ. सं. ; 16, 36 - नरकस्वर्ग संज्ञायै पापपुण्ये द्विजोत्तम ।

To help others⁸¹, not to afflict others⁸², austerity (Tapas)⁸³, truthfulness⁸⁴, different kinds of donation (donation of umbrella, of shelter, of light, of grain, of water, of gold, of cows, of land, of balance and of the whole universe)⁸⁵ digging of ponds and the planting of gardens⁸⁶, the study of scriptures and the Purāṇas⁸⁷, vows etc⁸⁸.

The evil actions : Apart from the negligence or disobedience of one's own duties and performance of prohibited deeds, sinful deeds are enumerated as follows : Un-truthfulness, blaming others, desire for other's property, adulterating, violence, regarding the body as soul, lack of faith in God and rebirth, hatred of mother and father, excessive respect for wife⁸⁹, effort to separate husband and wife⁹⁰, and malpractice against friends⁹¹. The Umāsamhitā gives a long list of sinful actions. It classifies sin into three groups mental, vocal and physical.

Mental :-

The will to enjoy others's wife and property, to think evil and decide to do evil are said to be mental evils.

Vocal :-

Gossip, speaking falsely, bitter speaking and back-biting are the vocal evil actions.

Physical :-

To eat non-eatable, violence, commencement of false actions and depriving others of their rights are said to be physical evil⁹².

The above-mentioned three kinds of evils or sins take different forms according to the degree of viciousness. These are named accordingly sumahat pātaka (very great sins) Mahāpātaka (great sins) and pātaka

81. वि. सं. ; 1, 36 बी - परोपकारसदृशो नास्ति धर्मो परः खलु

82. रु. सं. स. खं. ; 42, 5, 6, - परेषां क्लेशदं कर्म न कार्यं तत्कदाचन.....

तपस्येव फलं सर्वैः प्राप्यते नान्यथा क्वचित् ।

83. रु. सं. ; 21, 39 बी

84. सं. रु. सं. ; 26, 48 ; वी. यू. ; 12, 23, 36

85. उ. सं. ; 11, 12, 1-6 ; चैष्टर 13, 14

86. उ. सं. 12, 6, 22

87. उ. सं. ; 13, 2, 27-40

88. को. रु. सं. ; 38, 9, 23

89. वि. सं. ; 1, 12, 33

90. रु. सं. कु. खं. ; 1, 29

91. रु. सं. यु. खं. ; 3, 4, 5

92. उ. सं. ; 5, 3-5

(sins) and upapātaka (minor sins). All the social, moral, legal and other defaults and crimes are included in these sins. Hatred of Śiva, disrespect of Guru etc. are called very great sins. Killing of Brāhmaṇa, drinking of wine etc. are called great sins. Stealing, pride, anger, cowardness, destruction of flowers, trees and garden etc. are put in the list of sins and secondary sins⁹³.

All these classifications of Karma are based upon the Indian tradition mentioned in the Vedas, the Smṛtis and the Āgamas. All the Purāṇas have similar views about these moral duties of men. There are differences in philosophical exposition in the Purāṇas, but they do not differ regarding all these moral duties.

THE TREATMENT OF THE SĀṢKĀRAS IN THE PURĀṢAS

By

N. GANGADHARAN

[पुराणेषु पञ्चपुराणलक्षणातिरिक्तं बहुविधा विषया वर्णिताः सन्ति । पुराणेषु गृह्यसूत्राणां धर्मशास्त्राणामपि बहवो विषया वर्तन्ते । अत्र विदुषा लेखकेन पुराणेषूपलब्धानां संस्काराणां विविधपुराणानामाधारेण विवेचनं कृतम् । विविधग्रन्थेषु संस्काराणां संख्याऽपि न्यूनाधिका वर्तते । अत्र एतेषां समेषां विषयाणां निदर्शनं कृत्वा संस्काराणां पुराणाधारेण विवेचनं प्रस्तुतम् ।]

The Vedas are traditionally believed to be belonging to a hoary antiquity. The Purāṣas have imbibed the spirit of the Vedas and are recognised as potential source of our ancient culture. According to a statement the Vedas have to be amplified with the Itihāsas and Purāṣas and the Vedas are afraid of a man of less knowledge that he would distort the meaning of the Veas¹. The popular statement² relating to the *Mahābhārata* that whatever is found in it is found elsewhere and whatever is no found in it cannot be found anywhere else is very well applicable to the purāṣas. It is well-known that the Purāṣas should have the five characteristics - creation, scondary creation, genealogy of kings and patriarchs, Manu periods and history of important personages³. The Purāṣas contain lot of material on *dharma* legitimately flowing from the above topics.

Among the topics related to the Gṛhyasūtras found in Purāṣas, we may deal with the treatment of the Sāṣkāras. We may first explain the significance of the term Sāṣkāras. The Sāṣkāra (sacrament) means the religious purificatory rites and ceremonies for sanctifying the body, mind

1. इतिहासपुराणाभ्यां वेदं समुपबृंहयेत्
विभेत्यल्पश्रुतादेवो मामयं प्रहरिष्यति ॥

Mahābhārata I. 1, 268

2. यदिहास्ति तदन्यत्र यन्नेहास्ति न तत् क्वचित् ॥

Mahābhārata I. 62, 53

3. सर्गश्च प्रतिसर्गश्च वंशो मन्वन्तराणि च ।
वंशानुचरितं चैव पुराणं पञ्चलक्षणम् ॥

and intellect of a individual, so that he may become a fullfledged member of a community⁴. The number of Saṁskāras were not the same through all the periods. In early literature such as the *Gautamadharmasūtras* we find the number given as forty which includes the seven Pākayajñās, seven Haviryajñās, seven Somasaṁsthās and five Mahāyajñās besides the Saṁskāras described in the *Gṛhyasūtras*⁵. The *Gautamadharmasūtra* adds the eight *ātmaguṇas* - *dayā*, *kṣāntī*, *anasūyā*, *śauca*, *anāyāsa*, *maṅgala*, *akārpaṇya* and *aspṛhā*⁶. The *Skandapurāṇa* refers to the *ātmaguṇas*, but omits *dayā* and *anasūyā*⁷. But the *Gṛhyaūtras* generally deal with the twelve bodily Saṁskāras beginning with Vivāha and ending with Samāvartana. Most of them omit the Antyeṣṭi. The *Āśvalāyanagṛhyasūtra* gives the number as eleven and includes the Antyeṣṭi. The *Pāraskaragṛhyasūtra* includes the Antyeṣṭi and gives the number as twelve. The *Baudhāyanagṛhyasūtra* gives the number as thirteen and names the last one as Pitṛmedha. The *Varāhagṛhyasūtra* gives the number as thirteen and the *Vaikhānasagṛhyasūtra* gives the number as eighteen. There are certain other minor variations in the names in the different works noted above. The later Paddhatis on *dharma* mention sixteen Saṁskāras⁸. In general the *Gṛhyasūtras* begin with the description of the marriage rituals (Viavāha) and subsequently deal with impregnation (Garbhādhāna), generating the male child (Purṁsavana), parting of the hair (Simantonnayana), ritual at birth (Jātakarma), naming the child (Nāmakāraṇa), crossing the threshold (Niṣkramaṇa), feeding the child (Annaprāśana), partial removal of the hair on the head (Cūḍākaraṇa), initiation (Upanayana), and completion of study (Samāvartana). Then entering the life as a householder one becomes eligible to perform the religious rites.⁹

The *Agnipurāṇa* mentions eight Sṁskāras consisting of the first seven of the above and adding the life of a student as the eighth¹⁰. The narration in the *Purāṇas* begins with the description of the Garbhādhāna. The *Agnipurāṇa* points out that one becomes a *sura* by undergoing the

4. Rajbali Pandey, *Hindu Saṁskāras* 1993 (Reprint) p. 16.

5. *ibid.* p. 20.

6. सर्वभूतेषु क्षान्तिरनसूया शौचमङ्गलकार्पण्यमस्पृहेति । See A. B. L. Awasthi, *Studies in Skandapurāṇa* I. pp. 303-4.

7. See *ibid.*

8. Rajbali Pandey, *ibid.* pp. 23-24.

9. *ibid.* pp. 6-7.

10. गर्भाधानं तु योन्यां चै ततः पुंसवनं चरेत् ।
सीमन्तोन्नयनं चैव जातकर्म च नाम च ॥
अन्नाशनं ततश्चूडा ब्रह्मचर्यव्रतानि च ।

different Saṁskāras¹¹. It points out that the Garbhādhāna rite should be performed by a householder after marriage by having union with the wife for the first time on even days after her menstruation period if he desires to have a male child, discarding the first three days of the period of sixteen nights¹². It has to be noted here that the birth of a child is not merely accidental and it can be planned to be had according to one's desire at an auspicious moment conducive to the birth of a child with commendable virtues. The *Skandapurāṇa* adds the rite of 'planting the semen' (Bījakṣepa) as the first and prior rite to Garbhādhāna¹³. When the conception is explicitly known, the rite favouring conception is to be done. The rite for getting a male child is performed before the foetus begins to move¹⁴. The rite of parting of hair (Sīmantonayana) is done in the sixth or the eighth month after conception according to the *Agnipurāṇa*.¹⁵ Then it states that the Jātakarma should be done prior to the separation of the umbilical cord. Since childbirth mostly takes place in nursing homes nowadays, this rite is not being done. Hence the details from the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* will be interesting. Accordingly soon after the birth of a child one has to feed a pair of brahmins making them seated facing the east and perform the 'srāddha' rite for the manes offering balls of mixture of curd, barley and jujube for the satisfaction of the Nāndīmukha class of manes or offer all delicacies through the base of the little finger (known as the Prajāpatitīrtha). This Nāndī rite has to be done on occasions such as the marriage of the son or daughter¹⁶. This rite is done in order to invoke the blessings of the manes. While the *Agnipurāṇa* states that the Nāmakaṛaṇa is to be performed after the period of ten days of pollution is over,¹⁷ the

11. संस्कारान् कारयेद्दीमान् शृणु तान् वै सुरो भवेत् 132, 1 b

12. षोडशतुर्निशा स्त्रीणामाद्यास्तिस्रस्तु गर्हिताः 1153, 1 b

13. S. A. Dange, *Encyclopaedia of Purāṇic Beliefs and Practices* p. 297.

14. कर्माधानिकमिष्यते ।

गर्भस्य स्पष्टतान्नेने सवनं स्पन्दनात् पुरा ॥

153, 2

15. षष्ठेऽष्टमे वा सीमन्तं 153, 3a

16. युग्मास्तु प्राङ्मुखान्चिप्राङ् भोजयेन्मनुजेश्वर ।
यथा वृत्तिस्तथा कुर्यादिव पित्र्यं द्विजन्मनाम् ॥
दद्यात् यवैः सबदरैर्मिश्रान् पिण्डान् युदा युतः ।
नान्दीमुखेभ्यस्तीर्थेन दद्यादेवेन पार्थिव ॥
प्राजापत्येन वा सर्वमुपचारं प्रदक्षिणम् ।
कुर्यात् तत्तथाशेषवृद्धिकालेषु भूपते ॥

III. 10, 5-7

17. 153, 4.

Garuḍapurāṇa states that it has to be performed after eleven days¹⁸. The *Agnipurāṇa*,¹⁹ *Garuḍapurāṇa*²⁰ and *Viṣṇupurāṇa*²¹ then point out the indicatory suffices to be added to the names according to one's *varṇa*. The names of a brāhmaṇa should end in *śarman*, that of a kṣatriya in *varma*, that of a vaiśya in *gupta* and that of a śūdra in *dāsa*. The Niṣkramaṇa is performed in the fourth month²². The feeding is to be done in the sixth month,²³ and the Cūḍā to be done according to the family tradition²⁴. It may be noted that the general translation of the word as 'tonsure' in English is not correct. It is a misnomer since tonsure is the practice of shaving of the crown of the head whereas Cūḍā is leaving the hair on the crown and shaving the rest. The *Baudhāyanagr̥hyasūtra* mentions Karṇavedha or piercing the ear after the Cūḍākaraṇa²⁵. The *Agnipurāṇa* points out that Karṇavedha should be done on a Wednesday or Thursday ruled by the asterism Puṣya, 'Śravaṇa or Citrā'²⁶. The sin attached from the embryo state is removed by the performance of these rites²⁷. The *Vāmanapurāṇa* describes the Dwarf manifestation of lord Viṣṇu through Aditi and mentions that lord Brahmā performed the Jātakarma and other rites²⁸.

The Upanayana generally referred to as the 'Investiture of the sacred thread' and mainly signifying 'initiation', is to be done in the eighth year after conception for a Brāhmaṇa, in the eleventh year for a Kṣatriya and in the twelfth year for a Vaiśya according to the *Agnipurāṇa*²⁹ and as per the family tradition according to the *Garuḍapurāṇa*,³⁰ and never after the sixteenth year according to the *Agnipurāṇa*³¹. It should be noted that

18. I. 93, 10.

19. 153, 6.

20. The *Garuḍapurāṇa* does not mention this.

21. iii. 10, 8-9.

22. चतुर्थे मासि निष्क्रमः ।

I. 93, 12a.

23. षष्ठेऽन्नप्राशनं ।

I. 93, 12b.

24. चूडां कुर्याद्यथाकुलम् ।

I. 93, 12b. *Agnipurāṇa* 153, 7.

25. Rajbali Pandey, *ibid.* p. 19.

26. 121, 25.

27. एवमेव ज्ञानं याति बीजकर्मसमुद्भवम् ।

Garuḍapurāṇa I. 93, 13.

28. *Saromāhātmya* 9, 26.

29. 153, 8.

30. I. 94, 1.

31. 153, 8.

reference in most of the Purāṇas are very brief and do not elaborate the procedure. They corroborate the usual information from the Grhyasūtras regarding the age of initiation for the different varṇas and other details relating to other procedures such as the staff, sacred thread and the like. The *Vāmanapurāṇa* and the *Brahmavaivartapurāṇa* have some interesting details. The *Vāmanapurāṇa* refers to the investiture of the sacred thread for lord Viṣṇu manifested as a Dwarf and being conferred with other paraphernalia such as the deer skin, pitcher (kamaṇḍalu) etc.³². The *Brahmavaivartapurāṇa* describes the performance of the rite by Vasudeva in respect of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. Accordingly after the chanting of the auspicious *mantras*, making gifts of one hundred gold pieces to the brāhmaṇas, worshipping of group of six gods in the worship chamber with unbroken rice and offering sixteen kinds of services, and establishing in the chamber with appropriate *mantras*. Then the preceptor took charge of them³³. The concept of Upanayana has undergone many changes in course of time. In early period it denoted the rite through which the child was taken to the teachers. In modern days we often refer to it as investiture with the sacred thread. The rite originally intended to initiate the student into the austerities of the guru³⁴. After the Upanayana comes the Vivāha leading to the other rites as a householder.

As in the *Āśvalāyanagrhyasūtra* and the Smṛti texts, the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* mentions the eight types of marriages - Brāhma, Daiva, Ārsa, Prājāpatya, Āsura, Gāndharva, Rākṣasa and Paiśāca³⁵. The *Agnipurāṇa* describes them briefly explaining the methods³⁶. Accordingly Brāhma consists of giving a girl as a gift to a person of good conduct and belonging to a good family. Daiva is the gift of a girl to a priest officiating at a sacrifice. Ārsa is the gift of a girl along with a pair of cows. Prājāpatya is that in which a girl is gifted to a person seeking her. Gāndharva is that in which the girl and the boy settle the marriage by mutual agreement. Āsura is that in which the girl is given away for money. Rākṣasa is that in which the girl is taken away in a fight. Paiśāca is that in which the girl is taken away by

32. *Saromāhātmya* 9, 36-37.

33. S.A. Dange, *Encyclopaedia of Purāṇic Beliefs and Practices* pp. 912-3.

34. गुरोर्ब्रतानां वेदस्य यमस्य नियमस्य च ।
देवतानां समीपं वा येनासौ नीयंतेऽसौ ॥

Rajbali Pandey, *Hindu Samskāras*, p. 116.

35. III. 10, 24. These eight types of marriages are not described in the other Grhyasūtras.

36. 154, 9-11.

deceiving her. Among the eight types, the first four are considered as praiseworthy. According to the *Skandapurāṇa* the types of marriages are ten: Prājāpatya, Brāhma, Daiva, Ārṣa, Gāndharva, Āsura, Rākṣasa, Piśācaka, Prātibha and Ghātana. The last two were intended for the lower castes. This text does not explain the terms further³⁷.

Omitting the description of the social regulations relating to the different types of marriages, we may deal with the salient features of the marriage rituals as described in the Purāṇas. In the marriage rituals in general the most important are the Kanyādāna, Pāṇigrahaṇa, Homa, Saptapadī and Lājāhoma. The *Agnipurāṇa* states that marriage consists of four kinds of acts - Kanyādānā, Śacīyāga, Vivāha and Caturthikā³⁸. The usage पाणिग्रहः सवर्णासु implies that all savarna marriages were marked by the holding of the hand³⁹. We find the description of the śacīyāga in the *Agnipurāṇa*⁴⁰. Accordingly a figure of Indrāṇī (consort of Indra) should be made by the bride herself (or by anyone else) with clay from the potter's house on the marriage day. The figure should be adored near the pond and then the bride should be led inside the house accompanied by music. The Indrāṇīpūjā seems to be regional practice and it does not find a place in the Ṛgvyāsūtras.

The Caturthikā or Caturthikaraṇa denotes the performance on the fourth day after marriage. In orthodox families it followed the nuptial ceremony of three nights (Trirātravrata). At the end of it the husband made the wife eat uttering the words: 'I add breath to thy breath, bones to thy bones, flesh to thy flesh, skin to thy skin', according to the *Pāraskaragṛhyasūtra*⁴¹.

We have the reference in the Liṅgapurāṇa to the Pāṇigrahaṇa, Lājāhoma, offering of Madhuparka and a cow to the bridegroom,

37. प्राजापत्यस्तया ब्राह्मो देवार्थो चातिशोभनाः ।
गान्धर्वश्चासुरश्चैव राक्षसश्च पिशाचकः ॥
प्रातिभो घातनश्चेति विवाहाः कथिता दश ।

Skandapurāṇa VI. 241, 35-36. See S. A. Dange, loc. cit. p. 995.

38. कन्यादानं शचीयागो विवाहोऽथ चतुर्थिका ।
विवाहमेतत् कथितं नामकर्मचतुष्टयम् ॥

154, 4b-5a.

39. 154, 2.

40. वैवाहिकेऽह्नि कुर्यात् कुम्भकारमृदा शचीम् ।
जलाज्ञये तु तां पूज्य वाद्याद्यैः स्त्रीं गृहं नयेत् ॥

41. प्राणैस्ते प्राणान् संदधामि - अस्थिभिरस्थीनि
मांसैर्मांसानि त्वचा त्वचम् ।

Rajbali Pandey, loc. cit, pp. 224-225.

offering of blessings by sages with unbroken rice and sesamum⁴². The significance of the Pāṅgrahaṇa may be understood from the mantra recited at the time of the rite recorded in the Gṛhyasūtras: 'I seize thy hand for the sake of happiness, then thou mayest live to old age with me, thy husband.....Loving, bright with genial minds may we see a hundred autumns, may we live a hundred autumns, may we hear a hundred autumns.'⁴³ Then the first honour that the bride's father extends to the bridegroom is the offering of Madhuparka. It is a mixture of five sweet things consisting of curd, clarified butter, water, honey and sandal⁴⁴. The Lājāhoma is one of the important *homas* in the marriage ritual symbolising fecundity and prosperity⁴⁵.

The *Śivapurāṇa* describes in detail the marriage rite of lord Śiva and Pārvatī. In the preliminaries the *Śivapurāṇa* mentions that the bride and the bridegroom were put on the sacred thread. It describes in detail the chanting of the syllable *Om* regulated by the *ghaṭikā*, the priest holding the joined palms of the bride filled with unbroken rice grain and releasing the grain on the head of the bridegroom when the water in the *ghaṭikā* is exhausted.⁴⁶ Gadādhara quotes in his commentary on the *Pāraskaragṛhyasūtra* (I.4,8) a *veras* about the *ghaṭikā*. This item is not found in the Gṛhyasūtras. Since the *Śivapurāṇa* has referred to it we may describe it now. On the day of the marriage a *ghaṭi* or *ghaṭikā* (water clock) is set up with the recitation "Thou art the mouth of universal machinery created by Brahmā in the past; Thou art the measure of good feelings and the lack of good feelings between the husband and the wife.⁴⁷ We may resume the description as in the *Śivapurāṇa*. The bridegroom is then worshipped by the bride. The bridegroom then takes the hand of the bride. After the presentation of the gifts by the father of the bride, then a rite called the *pariyukṣaṇa* is done in which water is made to drip on the head of the bride. Then the bride offers into fire handfuls of fried grain (*lājāñjali*) filled by her brother. Then follows the anointing the head, showing of pole-star, touching of the heart of the bride, recitation of the

42. I. 103, 59. 60. 64. 65.

43. Rajbali Pandey, *loc. cit.* p. 218.

44. दधिसर्पिर्जलं क्षौद्रं सिता चेतैश्च पञ्चभिः ।

45. Rajbali Pandey, *loc. cit.* p. 218.

46. S. A. Dange, *loc. cit.* p. 999.

47. मुखं त्वमसि यन्त्राणां ब्रह्मणा निर्मितं पुरा ।

भावाभावस्य दम्पत्योः कालः साधनकारणम् ॥

Rajbali Pandey, *loc. cit.* p. 210.

Svastipāṭha and other minor acts.⁴⁸ The *Pāraskaragr̥hyasūtra* lays down the showing of the pole star by the bridegroom to the bride with the statement, "Firm art thou; I see thee the firm one. Firm be thou with me. Thriving one! To me Bṛhaspati has given thee; obtaining offsprings through me, thy husband, live with me a hundred autumns." The *Āśvalāyanagr̥hyasūtra* says that Arundhatī has to be shown⁴⁹ These performances are suggestive of firmness in the conjugal life.

The *Pāraskaragr̥hyasūtra* states that the bridegroom touches the heart of the bride reaching over her right shoulder with the words, "Into my will I take the heart; thy mind shall dwell in my mind; in my word thou shall rejoice with all thy heart; May Prajāpati join thee to me".⁵⁰ Since the heart is the place of one's feelings, this act is an attempt to rouse them symbolically. There are some brief descriptions in the *Vāmanapurāna*⁵¹ and the *Brahmapurāna*⁵² having certain different details which may be deemed as purely social practices.

The *Skandapurāna* refers to making seven steps in seven circles specially drawn and performing the ritual of holding the hands (*kara-grahaṇa*).⁵³ The marriage is recognised legally complete after the performance of this rite known as the Saptapadī. This can be understood from the *mantra* recited at this time: "One step for sap, two for juice, three for the prospering of wealth, four for comforts, five for cattle, six for seasons. Friend! Be with seven steps (united to me). So be devoted to me".⁵⁴

As already mentioned Antyeṣṭi is included among the Saṁskāras as the eleventh, twelfth etc. in some of the Gr̥hyasūtras. Although we find extensive treatment of this topic giving information regarding the rituals for the dead in some of the Purāṇas, the topic is not discussed here since most of the Gr̥hyasūtras do not deal with it, and pitṛmedhasūtra forms a separate text.⁵⁵

The foregoing account substantiates the utility of the Purāṇas in understanding the ancient Hindu tradition and also shows how the regional practices have got incorporated in the extensive material.

48. S. A. Dange, *loc. cit.* p. 999.

49. Rajbali Pandey, *loc. cit.* p. 222.

50. *ibid.* p. 220.

51. 27, 35-52.

52. 35, 14 and 36, 1-135.

53. S. A. Dange, *loc. cit.* p. 999.

54. Rajbali Pandey, *loc. cit.* p. 219.

55. *Agnipurāna* 157, 36ff; *Garuḍapurāna* II. 5ff (Pandita Pustakalaya edn.); *Varāhapurāna* ch. 187 etc.

VIṢṆUDHARMOTTARA-PURĀṆA AND AGNIPURĀṆA- A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE VṚKṢĀYURVEDA CHAPTERS

By

LALLANJI GOPAL

[विष्णुधर्मोत्तरपुराणे अग्निपुराणे च वृक्षायुर्वेदस्य विवरणं विद्यते । वराहमिहिरस्य बृहत्संहितायामपि वृक्षायुर्वेदस्य विवरणं प्राप्यते । अत्र लेखकेन प्रतिपादितं यद् विष्णुधर्मोत्तरपुराणे एष विषयः वृहत्संहिताग्रन्थतः गृहीतः । अग्निपुराणे चायं विषयः विष्णुधर्मोत्तरपुराणतः संगृहीतः । अतोऽयं विषयो विष्णुधर्मोत्तरपुराणे वृहत्संहितापेक्षया पश्चाद्वर्ती अग्निपुराणे च विष्णुधर्मोत्तरपुराणापेक्षयाऽपि नवीनः । अत्र विदुषा लेखकेन प्रमाणबाहुल्येन स्वमतस्य स्थापनं कृतम् ।]

On account of the economic utility of the trees and plants and their various products and their use in many religious activities, the Purāṇas show a great concern for their proper protection. They lay down rules to encourage the plantation of trees. The depletion in the vegetation world, caused by its consumption, was tried to be balanced. This created a genuine interest in various problems connected with plants, their growth, and the lay-out of gardens. In some of the Purāṇas we find passages relating to the trees and gardens in the context of many topics of social and religious significance. These accounts are not synthesised into compact unit as a distinct branch of knowledge. This is due to the nature of the Purāṇas and the scope of their subjectmatter.

The *Agnipurāṇa* and the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* are of a different nature. These are encyclopaedic in their contents. The Purāṇas, in their origin, had a well defined list of topics to be covered. In course of time the scope of the Purāṇas expanded with new subjects being included in them. Besides the Dharmaśāstra sections in some Purāṇas, three Purāṇas, which have a predominantly encyclopaedic character, are *Garuḍapurāṇa*, *Agnipurāṇa*, and *Viṣṇudharimottara-purāṇa*. The later two contain a chapter each on *Vṛkṣāyurveda*.

The chapter (282) in the *Agnipurāṇa*¹ contains fourteen verses. It is presented in the form of a narration by Dhanvantari. It begins the account

1. *Agnipurāṇa*, Uttarabhāga (With Hindi translation). Ed. Tarinisa Jha and Ghan Shyam Tripathi. Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Prayag, Allahabad, 1986.

by mentioning the direction in which the trees are to be planted (1-2). The planting is to be done after performing religious rites and under certain auspicious asterisms (3-4). For watering the plants in a garden a reservoir is to be constructed. The digging is to be done under certain named asterisms, after performing religious worship (4-6). The text names the trees which are to be planted first (6-7). It mentions the periodicity of watering the plants in different seasons, according to the requirements of soil in them (7-8). It prescribes the distance to be kept between the plants. If the distance is only twelve *hastas*, the plants may be transferred to another place (8-9).

For the treatment of a diseased plant the affected part is to be cut with a knife, a paste of viḍaṅga and ghee is to be smeared; and it is to be irrigated with cold water (9-10). For treating premature destruction of fruits and for promoting the growth of flowers and fruits two different decoctions are laid down for sprinkling (10-11). For preparing a decoction for sprinkling, effective for all kinds of trees, it requires powder of the stool of goats and sheep and of barley and sesamum in the washings of beef, to be kept covered for seven nights (11-12). It recommends watering with the washing of fish (13). It mentions the meat of fish covered with Viḍaṅga and rice as the pregnancy desire (*dohada*) of trees, which destroys the diseases of all kinds of trees (13-14).

In the *Viṣṇudharmottara-purāṇa*² chapter 300 in the second *khaṇḍa* is entitled *Vṛkṣāyurveda*. It is in the form of a narrative by Puṣkara. He addresses Bhārgava Rāma. He mentions the trees which are considered auspicious for the four directions (1-4). The garden is to be planned on the left side of the house. Before planting a tree, the soil is to be prepared by sowing sesamum and pulverizing them, when they have grown (3). Before planting, a proper worship is advised (4). The asterisms favourable for planting are listed (5).

If a garden is not flourishing, arrangement for a water-reservoir and a well is to be made. The work is to be started, under favourable asterisms, after proper religious worship (6-9).

Plants, which are auspicious, are named. They are to be planted first. The others are to be planted after these have grown in abundance, avoiding Śalmālī, Kovidāra and Vibhītaka. Asana, Devadāru, Palāśa and Puṣkara are specially recommended for a garden attached to a temple (10-14). The periodicity of watering the plants is to be done according to the requirements of the soil in different seasons (14-15).

2. *Viṣṇudharmottara-purāṇa*. Ed. Kshemaraj Shrikrishnadas. pub. Shri Venkateshwara Press, Bombay, reprinted by Nag Publishers, Delhi, 1985.

A proper spacing between the trees is advised. Trees grown closely, touch one another and their roots get interlocked. They do not bear fruits. For the treatment of the diseased trees their affected parts are to be scrapped or cut with a knife; they are to be smeared with a paste of Viḍaṅga and ghee and are to be irrigated with cold water (15-18).

A number of decoctions are prescribed for sprinkling. One is Kuluttha, Māṣa, Mudga, sesamum and barley, mixed with milk, boiled and then cooled. Another is to keep covered for seven nights the powder of stool of sheep and goats. barley-powder and sesamum with the washings of beef. Soaking of seeds in water mixed with tin and irrigating trees with the same is also advised. A fourth recipe is watering with the washings of fish (19-22).

For the growth of fruits and flowers treatment is recommended as their pregnancy desire (*dohada*) of mango trees, Mṛdvika, pomegranate, Bhavya, Pāṭala, Kapittha, Bilva, Mallikā, Kubjāk, Kharjura, Bakula, Aśoka, Nāraṅga, Akṣoṭa, Badara, Kālaka, Saptaparṇa, Kurabaka, Nārikera, Vaṃśa and Kadala. Viḍaṅga, covered with rice, and the meat of fish are mentioned as *dohada* for all Kinds of trees (23-33).

There is an obvious similarity in the two accounts of *Vṛkṣāyurveda* in the *Agnipurāṇa* (AP) and the *Viṣṇudharmottara-purāṇa* (V. Dh. P). It is to be seen in the topics covered and their sequence. It is also apparent in the details of the various provisions. Some of the lines in the two texts are identical. Thus, AP. 3b-4a=V.Dh. P.5; Ap 5a=V.Dh.P7; AP 6b-7a=V.Dh.P./ 10b-11a; AP 7b-8a=V. Dh.P. 14b-15a; AP8b-9a=V. Dh.P. 15b-16a; AP10-12=V. Dh. P. 18b-21a; AP 13a=V.Dh.P.22b. Verses 1, 2, 3a,4b, 5b, 6a, 9b, 13b and 14 of AP are modifications of the verses in the V.Dh. P, some times by slight rewording and sometimes by joining parts of lines in V. Dh.P.

This makes a strong case for the two accounts belonging to a common tradition of *Vṛkṣāyurveda*. One possibility is that they have the same origin, being based on the same text. But, there is no indication of an earlier text, from which the two can be said to have derived their narrative independently. Another possibility is that one of the two accounts was based on the other.

In the latter case the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* chapter seems to have been the original, which was used for preparing the narrative in the *Agnipurāṇa*. The *Viṣṇudharmottara-purāṇa* chapter is more detailed and its verses give a better sense in their fullness. It has its own form of narration, which is maintained by a reference to the addressee. In its effort to summarize, the *Agnipurāṇa* omits verses, lines and expressions, which,

at places, affects the clarity of the provisions. The *Viṣṇudharmottara-purāṇa* gives a detailed account of the specific treatment of a number of trees by way of manuring and irrigating by decoctions. These fertilising recipes are termed as pregnancy longings (*dohada*) of these trees. The *Agnipurāṇa* has only line 13b and verse 14 of a single line, mentioning the meat of fish covered with Viḍaṅga and rice as the *dohada*, which is the destroyer of the diseases of all the trees without exception.

It is to be noted that the account in the *Viṣṇudharmottara-purāṇa* (and hence also of the *Agnipurāṇa*) can be seen to be based on the Vṛkṣāyurveda chapter in the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* of Varāhamihira. The provisions on various points are evidently based on the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā*, sometimes incorporating lines and verses. But, it will not be fair to accuse the author of the *Viṣṇudharmottara-purāṇa* chapter to have copied the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā*. He made his own formulation on the basis of the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā*, sometimes accommodating a few lines and verses of the latter.

Our analysis of the contents of the vṛkṣāyurveda chapters in the two *purāṇas* and their comparative assessment, showing that the one in the *Viṣṇudharmottara-purāṇa* is earlier and was used after summarizing in the *Agni-purāṇa*, receives support from the chronological position of the two *purāṇas*.

It is very difficult to determine the date of the composition of Purāṇas with the result that there is no unanimity of opinion on the subject. With the advancement of research it is now generally accepted that sometimes individual sections (and even chapters) are to be dated independently. But, in any case, effort must be made to determine the original core of a Purāṇa text, as different from later accretions in it.

The range of dates proposed for the Agni-Purāṇa is astonishingly wide. Parasnath Dwivedi³ places it between the third and the fourth centuries of the Christian era. R.C. Hazra⁴ and S.K.De⁵ argue that the currently available text of the *Agni-purāṇa* is a new one, quite different from the earlier one, which is now lost. They place the composition of the available text in the ninth century. According to Kane,⁶ it is to be dated around A.D. 900. H.P. Shastri⁷ places it between 800 and 900 A.D. S.B.

3. *Agra University Journal of Research (Letters)*, Vol. XIX, part II (July, 1971), pp. 75-86.

4. *Puranic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs*, pp. 134-35.

5. *Sanskrit Poetics*, Vol. I, p. 102.

6. *History of Dharmasātra*, Vol. I, p. 172.

7. *Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. V. Preface.

Chaudhuri⁸ keeps the date a little earlier, between the eighth and ninth centuries. Some scholars hold that the Purāṇa acquired its form in course of several centuries, after the seventh century but before the eleventh. Thus S.D. Gyani⁹ suggests the date between A.D. 800/ 900 and 1000/1100. Sarita Handa¹⁰ shows that it borrowed its Ayurvedic material from the *Aṣṭāṅgasangraha*, *Vṛndamādhava* and *Cakradatta* or *Cakrapāṇi*, which shows that the ayurvedic sections in the text were incorporated in the first quarter of the twelfth century.

It is interesting to find that the *Viṣṇudharmottara-purāṇa* and the *Agnipurāṇa* have many common verses¹¹.

As compared with the *Agni-purāṇa*, the *Viṣṇudharmottara-purāṇa* is dated much earlier. Winternitz¹² had suggested the date between A.D. 628 and 1000. Kane¹³ also infers that the text was composed after A.D. 600, but not later than the tenth century. There is evidence for placing it earlier. Quotations from the *Viṣṇudharmottara* have been recorded by Hemādri, Devaṅṇabhaṭṭa, Aparārkāditya, Ballālasena and Al-Bīrūnī (A.D. 973-1048). Priyabala Shah¹⁴ places some portions of the third *Khaṇḍa* of the text after Bharata, but before Bhāmaha and Daṇḍin, between A.D. 450 and 650. The *Nāradiya-purāṇa* shows a realistic awareness of the nature and contents of this Purāṇa. Now, P.V. Kane places¹⁵ the *Nāradiya-purāṇa* in the time-bracket A.D. 700-1200, but T.G. Kale suggests the date A.D. 500-600. Earlier G.Buhler¹⁶ had suggested that the text was composed before A.D. 500. R.C. Hazra¹⁷ also prefers an earlier time-bracket of A.D. 400-500. R.C. Srivastava¹⁸ argues that the portions of the *Viṣṇudharmottara-purāṇa* which deal with Ayurvedic material have to be placed between the close of the sixth century and the first quarter of the seventh century. We have shown that for chapter 238 of *Khaṇḍa* III in the *Viṣṇudharmottara* dealing with

8. *Journal of the Andhra Historical Research Society*, Vol. III, pp. 127-34.

9. *The Agni Purāṇa, A study*, p. 288.

10. *Agni-purāṇa kī Dārśanik evaṃ Āyurvedik Sāmagrī kā Adhyayan*, p.8.

11. R.C. Srivastava, *Viṣṇu Dharmottara Purāṇa kā Cikitsā Vajjñānika Adhyayana* (Unpublished thesis approved for the Ph.D. degree of Banaras Hindu University, 1981), pp. 379-392; Sarita Handa, *Op.cit.*, pp. 421-422, 428. A closer search may yield a larger number of common verses on other topics and other chapters.

12. *History of Indian Literature*, Vol. I, p. 580.

13. *History of Dharmasāstra*, Vol. V, p.910.

14. *Viṣṇudharmottara-purāṇa*, III *Khaṇḍa*, preface.

15. *Op.cit.*, p. 893.

16. *Indian Antiquary*, XIX (1890), p. 408.

17. *Studies in the Up-purāṇas*, Vol. I, p. 212.

18. *Op. cit.*, p. 17.

ariṣṭas (prognostics) a date between A.D. 450 and 500 will meet the requirements of the case.¹⁹ On the basis of the use of the material in Chapter 54 of the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* of Varāhamihira (A.D. 505-587). we may suggest for the *Vṛkṣāyurveda* chapter in the *Viṣṇudharmottara-purāṇa* a date after A.D. 600.

Thus, we may conclude that the author of the *Viṣṇudharmottara-purāṇa* chapter on *Vṛkṣāyurveda* wrote it on the basis of the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā*, and the compiler of the *Agni-purāṇa* prepared his account on the basis of the *Viṣṇudharmottara-purāṇa*. This view receives support from the fact that the *Agni-purāṇa* borrows some of its Ayurvedic material from the *Viṣṇudharmottara-purāṇa*.²⁰

19. *Purāṇa*, Vol. XXIV, No.1 (January, 1982), p. 78.

20. Sarita Handa, *Op. cit.*, pp. 8, 421-12, 428.

SOME DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF THE BHĀGAVATA PURĀṆA*

By

KUSUM P. MERH

[पुराणवाङ्मये श्रीमद्भागवतमहापुराणस्य विशिष्टं स्थानं वर्तते । अस्य पुराणस्य टीकाबाहुल्येनास्य प्रचारस्य लोकप्रियत्वस्य च प्रमाणं प्राप्यते । नेदं पुराणं भक्तानामेव प्रियभूतमपि तु विदुषामपि पाण्डित्यनिकषभूतमत एवोक्तं-विद्यावतां भागवते परीक्षेति । अस्मिन् पुराणे वेदानामुपबृंहणं, पुराणदशलक्षणं, गद्यपद्यसम्मिश्रणं, भाषागतवैशिष्ट्यं, भक्तिदर्शनं तथा काव्यसौन्दर्यं च विशेषरूपेण दृश्यते । अस्मिन् निबन्धे 'एतेषां विषयाणां विस्पष्टरूपेण स्वरूपं प्रदर्श्य पुराणस्य विशिष्टसौन्दर्यस्य विवेचनं कृतम् ।]

According to the Puranic etymology the term *Purāṇa* means tradition or "that which exists from the ancient times", as the *Vāyu Purāṇa* (1. 123) says -

'Yasmāt purā hi anati tad purāṇam/;

or the record of past events as the *Matsya Purāṇa* (53.63) says - *Purātanasya Kalpasya puraṇāni vidur budh āh/*. Thus the word *Purāṇa* generally means "*purāṇam ākhyānam*"¹ or an ancient narrative.

It is rightly said that the *Purāṇas* afford us far greater insight into all aspects and phases of Hinduism - its mythology, its idol worship, its theism and pantheism, its love of God, its philosophy and its superstitions, its festivals and ceremonies and its ethics, than any other work².

The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (= *Bhāg. P*) represents Sanskrit literature in its divine literary form. It is said that the Vedas, the *Purāṇas* and the *Kāvya* instruct the people like a master, like a friend and like a beloved respectively³. But the *Bhāg. P.* is a unique composition which instructs like each of them. In the *upabrahmaṇa* of the Vedas it orders like a

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1. *Svyam dṛṣṭārthakathanam prāhuḥ ākhyānakam budhaiḥ* - Śrīdhara in his commentry on the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* According to it an *ākhyāna* is narrated by someone who has actually seen it happen.
2. Winternitz M., *A History of Indian literature*, Vol. I, p. 506, Motilal Banarasidass, 1990.
3. Mammaṭa, *Kāvya prakāśa* - vṛtti on I. 2.

master (*prabhusammita*); through its legends it advises like a friend (*suhṛdsammita*), and through its poetic beauty it coaxes in a gentle and charming manner like a beloved (*kāntāsammita*).

*Vedaḥ purāṇam ca kāvyam ca prabhu mitra priyeva ca /
bodhayanti iti hi prāhuḥ trivṛtam bhāgavatam punaḥ //*⁴

The Purāṇas are considered a sacred literature, only next to the Vedas, but a very special honour and sanctity which *Bhāg. P.* commands is too well expressed when it is called -

'nigamkalpatarorgalitam phalam /

(Bhag. p. 1. 1. 3)

It is also believed that the mind of the sage Vedavyāsa was extremely agitated after composing the great epic *Mahābhārata*. In order to get some soothing relief in the devotion to the Lord, he composed another *Purāṇa* and handed down to the posterity this gem known as the *Bhāg. P.*

It would be a mistake to believe that the *Bhāg. P.* is only for the devotees who have extreme reverence for it, who recite it with great devotion and experience through this the ecstasy of the closeness of the Lord. On an equal level it is considered as a test of the scholars' knowledge too (*"vidyāvātām bhāgavate parīkṣā"*).

The *Bhag. P.* is one of the eighteen Mahāpuraṇas. It contains 18000 stanzas. It is undisputedly the most popular and respected of all the Purāṇas. This fact is very well expressed by the 81 Sanskrit commentaries on the *Bhāg. P.* available to us. The earliest one is Śrīdharasvāmin's *Bhāgavata - bhāvārthadīpikā* (13th century). The saint poet Tulasidāsa was, as rightly remarked by Baladev Upadhyay, much influenced by the *Bhag. P.* His devotion to Rāma is prominent in the *Rāmacaritamānasa* and in this manner his Rāma is different from the Rāma of Vālmīkī whom Vālmīkī portrays as *Puruṣottam* i.e. one having excellent qualities, and not as God⁵.

The two powerful sects of Vaiṣṇavism viz. the *Vallabha* school and the *Caitanya* school have been deeply influenced by the *Bhāg. P.* Vallabhācārya mentioned the *Bhāg. P.* as the *Samādhibhaṣā* (language of profound meditation) of Vyāsa. It is also regarded by him as the '*Caturtha prasthāna*'.

4. Jīvasvāmin has quoted this stanza of Muktāphala in *Tatvasandarbhā*, page 74, Calcutta.

5. This stanza occurs in a prayer to Viṣṇu—
namas tubhyam bhagavate puruṣāya mahiyase - Bhāg. P. 8. 16. 29 also,
namo avyaktāya sūkṣmāya pradhāna puruṣāya ca /
caturvīṃśat guṇajñāya guṇasaṁkhyānahetave - Bhag. P. 8. 16. 30.

The *Bhāg. P.* was the first *Purāṇa* to be translated into a European language. It was translated into French in 1890 by E. Burnouf. The *Bhāg. P.* has certain distinctive features and they are as follows :

1. *upabṛ̥mhaṇa* of the Vedas.
2. *Purāṇadaśalakṣaṇam*.
3. *Combination* of prose and verse.
4. Some linguistic peculiarities.
5. *Philosophy of Bhakti*.
6. Its remarkable poetic beauty; the tenth *skandha* - a *Mahākāvya*.

1) *Upabṛ̥mhaṇa* :

The mysteries of the sacred lore of the Vedas is not understood by all. The *Mahābhārata* mentions that the language of the Vedas is difficult and therefore one should try to understand the Vedas with the help of the *Purāṇas*; otherwise the Vedas fear that a reader would misconstrue them -

*itihāsa-purāṇābhyām vedam samupabṛ̥mhayet /
vibhetyalpaśrutāt vedo māmamayam prahariṣyati //*

Using a metaphor of the full moon and moonlight, the *Mahābhārata* 1.1.86 also says -

'Purāṇapūrṇacandrena śruti jyotsnā prakāṣitā'

(the knowledge of the Vedas is brought forth and brightened by the *Purāṇas*).

The *Bhāg. P.* calls itself the "well ripe and the sweetest fruit of the Veda-tree (1.1.3). It also proclaims to be '*Sarvavedāntasāra*' (12.12.5). It is, therefore, no surprise that the *Bhāg. P.* contains a large amount of *upabṛ̥mhaṇa* matter. Here one comes across the *upabṛ̥mhaṇa* not only of the Vedic legends by providing details of a story, but also of the Vedic hymns by providing their explanation.

It is evident that the author of the *Bhāg. P.* was a scholar of the Vedas. He refers to the *Puruṣasūkta* (RV 10.90) in '*Puruṣam puruṣasūktena upatasthe samāhitaḥ* / (*Bhāg. P.* 10.1.20). At another place -

*'bhūriokaḥ kalpitaḥ padbhyām
bhuvaloko' sya nābhitaḥ
hṛdā svarlokaḥ urasā
maharlokaḥ mahātamaṇaḥ'*

(*Bhāg. p.* 2.5.38)

the parallel of this is found in the famous *Puruṣasūkta* (RV 10. 90.14)

nābhya āsit antarikṣam "-- *ṛdbhyām bhūmirdiśaḥ śrotrāt* / also,
"manaśca - sa - candramā - sarvavikārakoṣaḥ /

This can also be compared to RV 10.19.13 -

'Candramā manaso jātas /

The *Purūravas - urvaśī sūkta* (RV 10.95) is found in the 9th *Skandha* of the *Bhāg. P.* under the *Ailopākhyāna* where several stanzas are found as recast in simpler words. For instance the RV10.95.15 -

purūravo mā mṛthā mā pra pāpto mā tvā vṛkāso aśivāsa u kṣan /
naiva straiṇāni sakhyāni-santi-sālāvṛkanām hṛdayānyetāḥ //

is given like this in the *Bhāg. P.* -

mā mṛthā puruṣo'si tam mā sma tvādyurvṛkāḥ ime /
kvāpi sakhyam na vai strīṇām Vṛkānām hṛdayam yathā //

(*Bhāg. P.* 9.14.36)

Īśāvāsyamidam sarvam, the opening stanza of the *Īsopaniṣad* is explained in the *Bhāg. P.* (8.1.10) like this -

ātmāvāsyamidam viśvam

The stanzas 7 to 16 of the *Bhāg. P.* 8.1. are called "*Mantropaniṣad*" (*Bhāg. P.* 8.1.17). This clearly indicates that the author has taken mantras directly from the *Īsopaniṣad*. The wellknown stanza

"dvā suparṇā sayujā sakhāyā samānam vṛkṣam pariśasvajāte /
tayoranyaḥ pippalam svādvatti anyo anaśnan abhicākasīti //

(RV 1.164.20), AV 9.9.20 & Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad) describes the three basic concept of *Prakṛti*, Individual Self and the Supreme self with the help of a metaphor of the two birds. It is recast in a simpler way in the *Bhāg. P.* as follows :

suparṇāvetau sadṛśau sakhāyau yadṛcchayā tau kṛtanīḍau ca vṛkṣe /
ekastayoḥ khādati pippalānam anyo niranno' pi balena bhūyān //

(*Bhāg. P.* 11.11.6)

The *Vāyupurāṇa* (9.119) also explains the meaning of this Ṛgvedic stanza but it is not clear.

The Vedic stanza RV 1.54.1 glorifies Viṣṇu : -

Viṣṇornu kam vīryān pra vocam yaḥ pārthivāni vimame-rajāmisi /
yo askabhāyaduttaram sadhastham vicakramāṇas tredhorugāyaḥ //

It is explained in the *Bhāg. P.* 2.7.40 as follows -

"Viṣṇornu vīryagaṇanam-katamo' rhatīha
yaḥ pārthivānyapi kavir vimame rajāṅsi /
caskambha yaḥ - svaramhasā skhalatā tripṛṣṭham
yasmāt trisāmya sadanād urukampayānam //

'*Catvāri śṛṅgāḥ trayo' sya pādāḥ*" occurring in the *Ṛgveda* as well as in the *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā* (RV 4.58.3, VS 17.91) is interpreted variously. This *ṛcā* goes like this -

*Catvāri śṛṅgāstrayo'sya pādā dve śirṣe sapta hastāso'sya/
tridhā baddho vṛṣabho roravīti maho devo martyāñāviveśa //*
(RV 4.58.3, VS 17.91)

Patañjali takes it to be "*śabdastuti*", Rājśekhara as "*kāvyapurūṣa stuti*". *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa* explains it as pertaining to sacrifice, which is acceptable to Yāska. In the *Purāṇas* two different interpretations of this stanza are met with. The *Skandapurāṇa* (73.93-96) connects it with Śiva, while the *Bhāg. P.* connects it with sacrifice and through this with Viṣṇu.

*namo dviśirṣṇe tripade catuḥ śṛṅgāya tantave /
saptahastāya yajñāya trayī vidyātmane-namaḥ //*
(*Bhāg. P.* 8.16.31)

According to the *Bālbodhinī* commentary the four horns are the four Vedas, the two heads are *Prāyaṇīya* and *Udayanīya* (the preliminary sacrifices), the three feet are *prātaḥsavana*, *maddhyāñhasavana* and *sāyamṣavana*, and the seven hands are the seven metres.

2. Daśalakṣaṇa

A number of *Purāṇas* enumerate the five general characteristics of the *Purāṇas*⁶. They are 1. *Sargaḥ* (creation) 2., *Pratisargaḥ* (dissolution and re-creation) 3. *Vaṁśaḥ* (divine genealogy) 4. *Manvantarāṇi* (ages of Manu) and 5. *Vaṁśānucaritam* (genealogy of the kings).

But the subject matter of the *Purāṇas* can hardly be restricted to these pañcalakṣaṇas. Some of the *Purāṇas* contain much more than this and some do not deal with all the five lakṣaṇas, and therefore "to some of them it (the *pañcalakāṇa*) is utterly inapplicable, to others it only partially applies". Many *Purāṇas* contain the description of *Dāna* (Charity) *Vrata* (vows, religious observances) *tīrthas* (sacred places) and *śrāddha* (rituals for the manes) etc. also.

The *Bhāg. P.* (12.7.9) declares the following daśalakṣaṇas and according to it a *Mahapurāṇa* must have these ten characteristics.

*sargaścātha visargaśca vṛtti rakṣāntarāṇi ca /
vaṁso vaṁśānucaritam saṁsthā heturapāśrayaḥ //*
(*Bhāg. P.* 12.7.9)

6. Vāyupurāṇa I. 201, Varāhapurāṇa 2. 4, Bhāg. P. 12. 7

The five additional characteristics mentioned here are -

Visarga (creation of the living beings)

vṛtti (means of livelihood)

rakṣā (incarnation of gods)

hetu (jiva)

apāśraya (Brahman)

At another place the *Bhāg. P.* (2.10.1-7) gives the *daśalakṣaṇas* with some variation. They are -

1. *Sarga* (creation)
2. *Visarga* (creation of living beings)
3. *Sthāna* (different lokas of the *Brahmāṇḍa*, their detailed description, geography and astronomy)
4. *Poṣaṇa* (grace of God : the *Vallabha* sect of Vaiṣṇavism is also known as *Puṣṭi mārga*)
5. *Ūtayaḥ* (the bondage of *Karma*)
6. *manvantara*
7. *iśānukathā* (the stories of God's different incarnations)
8. *nirodha* (dissolution)
9. *mukti* (liberation)
10. *āśraya* (Brahman)

There is no basic difference between the two different sets of *daśalakṣaṇas* mentioned in the *Bhāg. P.* Furthermore, there is no contradiction with the *pañcalakṣaṇam* since all the ten characteristics can be merged in these five characteristics.

It is believed that the elaboration of the five topics to ten, as found in the *Bhāg. P.* and the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*, suggests the orientation of the *Purāṇa* literature from their mundane character to high metaphysics⁷. Śrīdhara has ascribed great distinction to the *Bhāg. P.* on the ground that it was the *Bhāg. P.* where all the ten topics mentioned above have received adequate treatment⁸. This has been put differently by Baladeva Upadhyay that the ten characteristics (*daśalakṣaṇas*) are exclusively for the *Bhāg. P.* and that they are not the general characteristics of all the *Purāṇas*⁹. The *Bhāg. P.* also says that the tenth characteristic (i. e. *āśraya; apāśraya*) is the most important of all of them. Since the subject

7. Bhattacharya S. The Philosophy of the Śrīmadbhāgavata, Vol. I page VII.

8. Op. Cit., page IX. In this connection Śrīdhara's comments are worth-noting.

9. Upadhyay Baldev, *Purāṇa Vimarśa*, page 138.

of the *Bhāg. P.* is God, the other nine characteristics support this subject and independently they have no value. The *Bhāg. P.* says-

daśamasya viśuddhyartham navānāmiha lakṣanam /

(*Bhāg. P.* 2.10.2)

3. The Prose Content

Another distinctive feature of the *Bhāg. P.* is the combination of prose and verse in it. Among all the Purāṇas the *Bhag. P.* has the maximum prose content. Barring a few chapters (viz. 5, 11, 12, 13) the whole of the 5th *Skandha* consisting of 26 chapters is in prose. The prose here is in short sentences and at some places imitates the style of the *Brāhmaṇas*. There are a number of cases where the author has tried to give an archaic tinge to his expressions and the Vedic expletives are extensively used, for instance-

'iti hovāca' - (5.4.19)

'tasmin vāva kila sa' - (5.7.11)

'Kim vā are ācaritam' - (5.8.25)

4. Linguistic Peculiarities

The Purāṇas have linguistic aberrations and like other Purāṇas the *Bhāg. P.* too contains some linguistic traits which are peculiarly its own. the most prominent of them is the archaism. For example-

1. The *Bhāg. P.* uses the word 'ayasmaya' (1.1.17; meaning 'made of iron' instead of the classical 'ayomaya'.
2. The word "*Bhagavaḥ*" occurs in the *Bhāg. P.* (5.6.1 etc.) which is the vocative singular of 'bhagavat' and quite common in the *Bhāhmaṇas*.
3. *..hāntave* (4.19.15; 11.5.15) is the Vedic dative infinitive from √han with tave termination (c.f. Pāṇini, 3.4.9).

There is also constructional archaism seen in the *Bhāg. P.* In '*Pari ye caranti*' (10.87.4; 87.27) 'ye' intervenes between '*pari*' and '*caranti*'. This is also a Vedic feature i.e. proverbs can occur freely. There are also irregular sandhis, for examples-

Karisyeti (12.5.2) for *karisye + iti*.

tasyagre (10.12.32) for *tasyāḥ + agre*

By the time of the *Bhāg. P.* the '*pada*' distinction is already fixed, but to imitate the Vedic language the *Bhāg. P.* sometimes obliterates the '*pada*' distinction. The '*ātmanepada*' is used for *parasmaipada* in the words like-*patamāna* (10.72.20) and thus the *pada* distinction is ignored. There is also lengthening and shortening of a vowel for the sake of the meter, for example-

anāhuta (4.11.13) instead of *anāhūta* and *niśītha* (4.13.11) instead of *niśītha*. For the sake of metre again there is *tanuvā* for *tanva* and *śruṇūvan* for *śṛṇvan*.

There are also some words of lexical interest, for example, *-araṇa* (5.10.9) meaning 'refuge', *alamtama* (6.17.37) meaning 'most capable'. *aṣṭi* (4.28.36) meaning 'stone of a fruit' *uttamagāya* (4.12.21) meaning 'striding best'. (This is how the *Bhāgavatakāra* takes *urgāya*, a well known Vedic epithet of Viṣṇu meaning 'having wide strides'. Now he is not 'wide strider' but the 'best strider').

tarṣā (10.9.27) = thirst

punsavana (5.24.15) = foetus

Notwithstanding the archaic tinge in the expression, many prominent traits of the *Kāvya* style, e.g. love for alliteration and numerous other figures of speech found here bring the language of the *Bhāg. P.* closer to the classical literature.

5. Philosophy of *Bhakti*

The *Bhāg. P.* is well known for its treatment of the doctrine of *Bhakti*. The *Bhakti* of the highest order consists in the flow of the heart to the lord. This pure devotion does not ask for any rewards other than *Bhakti* itself. In this way *Bhakti* becomes for the devotee the *sāadhanā* as well as the *sādhyā*. A devotee wants to acquire the *Bhakti* alone as a boon from the Lord. He does not desire any worldly gains, the highest heaven, to rule over the whole earth or even liberation because he says that liberation which brings union with the Lord will block his way to his service (*Bhāg. P.* 3.12.13). The devotee desires only to remain in the service of the Lord's feet-

*aham hare tava pādaikamūla-
dāsānudāso bhavitāsmi bhūyaḥ /
manas smaretāsupateḥ guṇānste
grṇīta vak karma karotu kāyaḥ //*
(*Bhāg. P.* 6.11.24)

also,

*na nākapṛṣṭham na ca pārameṣṭhyam
na sārvaḥaumam na rasādhipatyam /
na yogasiddhīrapunarbhavam vā
samañjasa tvā virahayya kānkṣe //*
(*Bhāg. P.* 6.11.25)

The intensity of a devotee's desire to see the Lord is compared to that of a wingless nestling for its mother, or of a hungry infant's for its mother's milk, or of a distressed beloved for her lover.

*ajātapakṣā iva mātaram khagāḥ stanyam yathā vatsatarāḥ kṣudhārtāḥ /
priyam priyeva vyuṣitam viṣaṇṇa mano'rvindākṣa didrṁṣate tvām //*

The nine-fold devotion is implied in the *Bhagavadgītā*¹⁰ but it is especially mentioned and expanded in the *Bhāg. P.* According to it the nine types of *Bhakti* are as mentioned below-

*śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoḥ smaraṇam pādasevanam /
arcanam vandanam dāsyam sakhyam cātmanivedanam //*

(*Bhāg. P.* 7.4.22-24)

These are gradual ascending steps, *śravaṇam* (listening to the chants in praise of the Lord) being the first step followed by *Kīrtana* (singing the praise of the Lord).

The author of the *Bhāg. P.* classified the devotees into three categories-*uttama*, *madhyama* and *prākṛta* (11.2.45-47). The *Bhāgavatottama* sees the Lord in all beings. The *madhyama* devotee has love for God, friendship with the other devotees, compassion for the fools and indifference to the enemies. A *prākṛta* devotee worships the idol with devotion and does not realise that God exists everywhere and in all beings.

The *Rāsakrīḍa* of Lord Kṛṣṇa and the Gopies represents the *Bhaktiyoga* of the *Bhāg. P.* in a remarkable way¹¹. This *Bhakti* can not be included in any of these classifications because it outreaches them all. It is termed as *śrīṅgārabhakti*. It brings out the most important principle of the *Bhāgavatkāra* who stresses on the concentration of mind on Lord Kṛṣṇa in any manner—

*Kāmād dveṣāt bhayāt snehād yathā bhaktyā īsvare manaḥ /
āveśya tat agham hatvā bahavas tad gatim gatāḥ //
gopyaḥ kāmāt, bhayāt kaṁsaḥ dveṣāt caidyadāyo nṛpāḥ /
sambandhāt vṛṣṇayaḥ snehād yūyam bhaktyā vayam vibho //*

(*Bhāg. P.* 7.2.29 & 30)

also-

kenāpyupāyena manaḥ Kṛṣṇe niveśayet // (*Bhāg. P.* 7.2.31)

It is established that the teachings of the Vedas and the Purāṇas are same, only their words and the method differ¹². Even the message of *Bhakti* is found, in some form, to be present in the Vedas and the Upaniṣads¹³. The *Kāthopaniṣad* 1.2.23 says that one can not attain God by knowledge, intellect or scholarly discussions only.

10. Desai Sushila, *Bhāgavatapurāṇa-a critical study*, page 121.

11. Desai Sushila, *op. cit.*, page 123.

12. Vyas R.N., *The Synthetic philosophy of the Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, Introduction, page. 9.

13. Cf. Kantawala S.G., paper on navadhā bhakti in the Vedas.

*na ayam atmā pravacanena labhyaḥ
na medhayā na bahudhā śrutena /*

This can be compared to *Bhāg. P.* 11.2.31 where it is stated-
*tasmāt mad bhaktiyuktasya yogino vai madātmanaḥ /
na jñānam na ca vairāgyam prāyah śreyo bhavediha //*

6. The Tenth *Skandha*-its remarkable poetic beauty

The *Bhāg. P.* is a *Mahāpurāṇa* where all the ten characteristics of a *Mahāpurāṇa* have received adequate treatment. Apart from this, the *Bhāg. P.* is also a great *Kāvya*. The whole *Purāṇa* is a poetic creation and its tenth *skandha* very beautifully fulfills all the requirements of a *Mahākāvya*¹⁴. Thus another remarkable feature of the *Bhag. P.* is its poetic beauty. This *Purāṇa* = "more than any of the others bears the stamp of a unified composition and deserves to be appreciated as a literary production on account of its language, style and nature"¹⁵.

The twelve *skandhas* of the *Bhāg. P.* are considered as the twelve parts of Lord Kṛṣṇa's divine form, and out of them the tenth *skandha* is said to be the Lord's heart, full of the delicate emotions of love.

The *Kṛṣṇacarita* viz. the incidents from the life of an incarnate God is the theme of the tenth *skandha*. Its *pūrvārdha* and the *uttarārdha* contain 49 and 40 chapters respectively. The author has used a variety of metres and does not restrict to the general rule of using *anuṣṭubh* in all the *Purāṇas*.¹⁶

The poetic beauty of the *Bhāg. P.* is captivating. The main sentiment here is the *Bhaktirasa*, which is, according to Bopadeva, "*Camatkāra* or a flash of feeling generated in the heart by hearing or singing (*śravaṇam*, *kīrtanam* etc.) of the life of the Lord Viṣṇu or of his devotees."¹⁷ The *sthāyibhāva* here is the concentration of the mind (*manoniveśa*) in Lord Kṛṣṇa. Apart from this main *rasa* all the other *rasas* mentioned by the rhetoricians are found in the *Bhāg. P.* The *adbhutarasa* nourishes the main sentiment i.e. *Bhakti* by revealing the glory of the Lord. The main object of the *Bhāgavatakāra* is to generate *Bhakti* in the hearts of the reader—and with this leading them to oneness with God. All the sentiments in the *Bhāg. P.* nurture the *Bhaktirasa* which nurtures the *Śāntarasa*.

14. Desai Sushila in her above mentioned book has pointed out how all the characteristics of a *Mahākāvya* are found in the *Bhāg. P.*

15. Winternitz M. op. cit. Vol. I.

16. *Purāṇa pratibimbeṣu prasannopāya - vartmasu /
upadeśapradhāneṣu kuryāt sarveṣu anuṣṭubham //*
Suvṛttatilaka of Kṣemendra (3.9)

17. Desai Sushila, op. cit. page 196.

Thus the *Bhāg. P.* fulfills another requirement of *Mahākāvya* regarding the main sentiment which should be *Śānta, Vīra* or *Karuṇa*¹⁸.

In the *Bhāg. P.* there are beautiful descriptions of the holy cities Mathurā and Dwārakā (chapters 10.41; 10.69 respectively), fierce battles are described at length in 10.75 (battle with Śiśupāla); Kṛṣṇa-Bāṇāsura battle in 10.63 etc. As Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa enter the city of Mathurā, the womenfolk were extremely curious to have a look of this brave duo. Their excitement and haste is poetically described as they left aside the work they were engaged in and rushed to the windows.

*Kāścid viparyag dhṛtavastrabhūṣaṇāḥ
vismṛtya caiekam yugaleṣu athāparāḥ /
Kṛta ekapatraśravaṇaikaṇūpurā
nāṅktvā dvitīyam tu aparās ca locanam //*
(*Bhāg. P.* 10.41.25)

In their haste and excitement some of the ladies put their clothes and ornaments in a wrong manner, others forgot to put on one of their earrings or anklets, and others also rushed even without applying collyrium to the other eye.

The description of the seasons is a favourite topic of the poets. In the tenth *skandha* of the *Bhāg. P.* one full chapter (10.20) is devoted to the description of the rainy season and the autumn season. In the description of these seasons the literary beauty is combined with deep philosophical reflections. The author of the *Bhāg. P.*, being a philosopher-poet, views the nature to be a spiritual guide of the mankind (11.7.33-35). Charming similes are used to convey some didactic message or some reflective idea which is extended to the reader through poetry.

*mārgāḥ babhūvuḥ sandigdhas tṛṇais cchannā hi asaṁskṛtāḥ /
na abhyasyamānāḥ śrutayo dvijaiḥ kālakṛtā iva //*
(*Bhāg. P.* 10.20.16)

(In the monsoon the paths became covered with grass, rendering them unrecognisable, just as the scriptures become dubious after some time if they are not properly recited).

The description of rainy season of the *Rāmācaritamānasa* of Tulasīdāsa seems to be based on this style of the *Bhāg. P.* The most beautiful part of the tenth *skandha* is the expressions of the deep passions of the gopis which are named as 'venugīta' 'gopigīta' 'bhramargīta' etc.

18. Mahābhārata Śāntaḥ, Rāmāyaṇe Karuṇaḥ --- Sāhityadarpaṇa of Viswanath IV, page 233.

While judging the ultimate merit of any piece of literature adequate attention must be paid to its philosophy, because no poet can be a great poet without, at the same time, being a great philosopher. Judged by this standard also the *Bhāg. P.* can be ranked with the best of the literary works., The entire philosophy of the *Bhāg.P.* is a bold attempt to know the infinite, the Supreme Truth.

ACTIVITIES OF THE ALL INDIA KASHIRAJ TRUST

(January 1998- June 1998)

Garuḍa Purāṇa Work

The printing of the critical edition of the Garuḍa Purāṇa Ācārakāṇḍa, continued during this period. The Appendix work is also continued.

Work on unpublished Manuscript of the Purāṇa

The verse index of the printed text of the Vasiṣṭha Linga Purāṇa is completed. The Introduction of the text is being prepared.

Visitors to Purāṇa Department

During the period many scholars visited the Purāṇa Department. Some of them put their remarks in the visitors book. Some names are as follows .

1. Prof. Boisvert- University of Quebec, Montreal, Canada
2. Dr. Lowec Libecole, University of Torino (Italy).
3. Dr. Srikant Bahulkar, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapith, Pune
4. Stella Seddor, U.K.

Veda Pārāyaṇa

During the white half (Śukla Pakṣa) of month Māgha (Jan.-Feb.) the Taittirīya Samhitā of the Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda was recited in Vyāsa Temple of fort Ramnagar by memory by Pt. Dendu Puri Venkat Subrahmanya Somayaji Agnihotri. Pt. Vireshwar Shastri Dravid was the Śrota. On the successful conclusion Dakṣiṇā and travelling expenses were given to reciter and Śrotā. A certificate was also given to them.

Activities of the Sister Trusts

(1) Maharaja Benaras Vidyamandir Trust

Dhrupad Mela-1998

The 24th Annual Dhrupad Mela organised by the Maharaja Benaras Vidya Mandir Trust at Tulsi Ghat was held on 23,24,25. February, 1998.

The Mela was inaugurated by Yuvaraja Shri Anant Narain Singh who spoke about the ever increasing success of the Dhrupad Mela and dignity of this concert platform. Prof. Virbhadra Mishra also gave a commendable report on the Dhrupad Mela and welcomed the musicians. Other dignitaries. Dr. Rajeshwar Acharya, Shri Batuk Nath Sharma and other eminent musicians graced the opening session.

During the course of the Mela two prizes to promote young talented Dhrupad Musicians were instituted in memory of the Late Shri Anil Kumar Mishra 'Jhunna'. These prizes were given for the first time this year to Smt. Kaveri Kar (Dhrupad Vocal) and Shri Uddhav Sinde (Pakhawaj). A token of praise and generosity goes to eminent pakhawaj player Pt. Ramakant Pathak who donated Rs. 10,000/= for the promotion of the future Dhrupad Mela.

Sixty one Dhrupad vocalists, instrumentalists and Pakhawaj players performed at the Mela. Among the important performers were Pt. Siyaram Tiwari, Sukadewa Pawar, Ustad Sayiduddin Dagar, Mr. Philip phalse, Shri Uddhava Sinde, Pt. Ramakant pathak, Shri Prem Kumar Mallik, Dr. Ritwik Sanyal and Prof. Rajbhan Singh etc.

On 26 February 1998 Ustad Sayiduddin Dagar performed the Dhrupad in Fort Ramnager in presence of His Highness Maharaja Dr. Vibhuti Narain Singh.

(B) Mangalotsava

This year Mangalotsava was organised in Fort Ramnager on 17th and 18th March 1998. On first day Nādasvaram was performed by the artists of Sri Viswanath Temple. On the same day sahanai players from Varanasi and Ramnager also performed their art. On the 18th April 1998 Pt. Ravishankar Misra of Varanasi song Chaiti and Thumari and Misra brothers (Pt. Mata Prasad Misra and his brother) performed the Katthak dance. Officials of Varanasi, eminent citizens, sardars, and common people were present in the Mangalotsava

(2) Maharaja Udit Narain Singh Mānasa Prachar Nidhi

Mānasa Pāṭha and Pravachan

Under the auspices of this Trust Navāha Pārāyaṇa and Pravachana (recitation and discourses for nine days) from Vaiśākha Śukla Dvitiyā to

Daśamī (from 27 April 1998 to 5th May 1998) was organised on the ground of Kaliji Temple of Chakiya. Many famous Vyāsas of the North India gave discourses on the Rāma Carita Mānasa of Tulasīdāsa. A huge number of listeners daily attended the discourses. His Highness Maharaja Dr. Vibhuti Narain Singh was present in discourses. On the concluding day Pūjana and Bhadara was organised.

सर्वभारतीय काशिराजन्यासस्य कार्यविवरणम्

(जनवरी १९९८-जून १९९८)

गरुडपुराणकार्यम्

गरुडपुराणस्य मुद्रणकार्यं यथा पूर्वं क्रियमाणमस्ति । प्रूफसंशोधनकार्यं प्रचलति । परिशिष्टादिकार्यमपि प्रचलति ।

अप्रकाशितपुराणहस्तलेखानां संपादनकार्यम्

वसिष्ठलिङ्गपुराणस्य मूलपाठस्य श्लोकानुक्रमणी निर्मिता जाता । भूमिकालेखनकार्यं प्रचलति ।

पुराणविभागे आगता विद्वांसः

बहवो विद्वांसो विद्यार्थिनश्च अस्मिन् अवधौ पुराणविभागे समागताः । केचन विद्वांसः दर्शकपुस्तिकायां स्वमतान्यपि लिखितवन्तः । केषांचिद् विदुषां नामानि अधोनिर्दिष्टानि सन्ति -

१. प्रो. ब्वाइस्वर्ट - क्यूबेक विश्वविद्यालय कनाडा इत्यत्रत्यः
२. डा. लोवेक लिबिकोले-टोरिनो (इटली) विश्वविद्यालयस्य
३. डा. श्रीकान्त बाहुलकर-तिलक महाराष्ट्र (पुणे) विद्यापीठस्य
४. स्टेला सेडोर-इग्लैण्डवास्तव्यः

वेदपारायणम्

माघमासस्य शुक्ले पक्षे (२९ जनवरी १९९८-११ फरवरी १९९८) कृष्णयजुर्वेदस्य तैत्तिरीयसंहितायाः कण्ठस्थपारायणं रामनगरदुर्गस्थिते व्यासेश्वरमन्दिरे पण्डित श्रीदेन्दुपुरी वेङ्कटसुब्रह्मण्यसोमयाजिशर्माग्निहोत्रिमहोदयेन कृतम् । श्रीवीरेश्वर शास्त्रिद्राविडमहोदयः श्रोता आसीत् । पारायणसमाप्तौ पारायणकर्त्रे श्रोत्रे च दक्षिणा प्रमाणपत्रं च प्रदत्तम् ।

सहयोगिन्यासानां कार्यविवरणम्

(१) महाराज बनारस विद्यामन्दिर न्यासः

धूपदमेला

अस्मिन् वर्षे महाराज बनारस विद्या मन्दिर न्यासेन चतुर्विंशतितमस्य धूपदमेलापकस्यायोजनं वाराणस्यां तुलसीघट्टे २३, २४, २५ फरवरी १९९८ दिनाङ्केषु कृतमासीत् ।

मेलापकस्योद्घाटनं युवराजेन श्रीअनन्तनारायणसिंहमहोदयेन दीपप्रज्वालनेन कृतम् । युवराजेन मेलापकस्य वर्धमानमहत्त्वस्य विषयेऽपि व्याहरितम् । महन्त श्रीवीरभद्रमिश्रेण मेलापकस्य विवरणं प्रदाय संगीतज्ञानां स्वागतं कृतम् । अस्मिन् अवसरे श्रीराजेश्वर आचार्य, श्री वटुकनाथ शर्मा प्रभृतयो विद्वांसोऽपि उपस्थिता आसन् । अस्मिन् वर्षे श्री अनिलकुमार झुन्ना महोदयस्य स्मृतौ द्वौ पुरस्कारौ नूतनकलाकाराभ्यां प्रारब्धौ । अस्मिन् वर्षे इमौ पुरस्कारौ श्रीमयै कावेरीकारमहोदयायै तथा श्रीउद्वव शिन्दे महोदयाय प्रदत्तौ । अयं पुरस्कारः प्रमुखपखावजवादकस्य पं. रमाकान्त पाठकस्य १०००० रुयकाणां दानेन प्रारब्धः । षष्टिधूपकलाकाराः अस्मिन् मेलापके आगता आसन् । कलाकारेषु पं. सियाराम तिवारी, शुकदेव पवार, सईदुद्दीन डागर, फिलिप फाल्से, उद्वव शिन्दे, रमाकान्त पाठकः, प्रेमकुमार मल्लिक, ऋत्विक् सन्याल, राजभानसिंह प्रमुखा आसन् ।

२६ फरवरी १९९८ दिनाङ्के श्रीसईदुद्दीन डागर महोदयः रामनगरदुर्गे महाराजानां समक्षं स्वकलायाः प्रदर्शनं कृतवान् ।

(२) मङ्गलोत्सवः

१७, १८ मार्च १९९८ दिनाङ्कयोः रामनगरदुर्गे मङ्गलोत्सवस्य आयोजनं जातम् । प्रथमदिने श्रीविश्वनाथमन्दिरस्य 'नादस्वरम्' वादकैः प्रथमं स्वकलायाः प्रदर्शनं कृतम् । तदनन्तरं च वाराणस्याः रामनगरस्य च शहनाईवादकैः शहनाईवादनं कृतम् । द्वितीय दिने पण्डितरविशंकरमिश्रमहोदयेन चैती-ठुमरी गायनं कृतम् । तदनन्तरं मिश्रबन्धु-महोदयाभ्यां (माता प्रसाद-रविशंकर महोदयाभ्यां) कथकनृत्यस्य प्रदर्शनं कृतम् । अस्मिन् उत्सवे वाराणस्या अधिकारिणः विशिष्टा नागरिकाः सरदाराः सामान्या जनाश्चोपस्थिता आसन् ।

(२) महाराज उदित नारायण सिंह मानस प्रचारनिधिः

मानस नवाहपारायणम्

अनेन न्यासेन चक्रिया नगरस्थिते कालीजी मन्दिरस्य प्राङ्गणे वैशाखमासस्य शुक्लपक्षस्य द्वितीयातिथिमारभ्य दशमीतिथिपर्यन्तं रामचरितमानसस्य नवाहपारायणस्य प्रवचनस्यायोजनं कृतम् । प्रातःकाले पारायणं सायंसमये च प्रवचनं जातम् । प्रवचनं वाराणस्या अन्यस्थानानां च प्रमुखव्यासैः कृतम् । प्रवचनेषु श्रोतॄणां संख्या अत्यधिका आसीत् । समाप्तिदिने हवन-पूजन-भोजनादिकं संपन्नम् । तत्र भवन्तः काशिनरेशा डा. विभूतिनारायणसिंहशर्मदेवाः कार्यक्रमेषु उपस्थिता आसन् ।

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TO

पुराणम्

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PREPARED

by

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ALL-INDIA KASHIRAJ TRUST



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