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डॉ. रामकरण शर्मा

भूतपूर्व कुलपति, सम्पूर्णानन्द संस्कृतविश्वविद्यालय, वाराणसी, नयी दिल्ली

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Traditional Sanskrit scholars are requested to send us articles in Sanskrit (i) dealing with the religious & Philosophical matters in the Purāṇas and (ii) explaining the obscure & difficult passages in the Purāṇas.

पुराणम्-PURĀṆA

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डॉ. गङ्गासागररायः

भुवनेश्वरीस्तोत्रम्

(श्रीमद्देवीभागवतमहापुराणम् ३.४.२६-४९)

[एकदा तां महादेवीं देवीं श्रीभुवनेश्वरीम् ।

तुष्टाव भगवान् विष्णुर्युवतीभावसंस्थितः ॥ ३.४.२६]

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

नमो देव्यै प्रकृत्यै च विधात्र्यै सततं नमः ।

कल्याण्यै कामदायै च वृद्धिसिद्ध्यै नमो नमः ॥ २७

सच्चिदानन्दरूपिण्यै संसारारणये नमः ।

पञ्चकृत्यविधात्र्यै ते भुवनेश्यै नमो नमः ॥ २८

सर्वाधिष्ठानरूपायै कूटस्थायै नमो नमः ।

अर्धमात्रार्थभूतायै हल्लेखायै नमो नमः ॥ २९

ज्ञातं मयाऽखिलमिदं त्वयि सन्निविष्टं

त्वत्तोऽस्य संभवलयावपि मातरद्य ।

शक्तिश्च तेऽस्य करणे विततप्रभावा

ज्ञाताऽधुना सकललोकमयीति नूनम् ॥ ३०

विस्तार्य सर्वमखिलं सदसद्विकारं

संदर्शयस्यविकलं पुरुषाय काले ।

तत्त्वैश्च षोडशभिरेव च सप्तभिश्च

भासीन्द्रजालमिव नः किल रञ्जनाय ॥ ३१

न त्वामृते किमपि वस्तुगतं विभाति

व्याप्यैव सर्वमखिलं त्वमवस्थिताऽसि ।

शक्तिं विना व्यवहृतो पुरुषोऽप्यशक्तो

बंधयते जननि बुद्धिमता जनेन ॥ ३२

प्रीणासि विश्वमखिलं सततं प्रभावैः
 स्वस्तेजसा च सकलं प्रकटीकरोषि ।
 अत्येव देवि तरसा किल कल्पकाले
 को वेद देवि चरितं तव वै भवस्य ॥ ३३

त्राता वयं जज्ञनि ते मधुकैटभाभ्यां
 लोकाश्च ते सुवितताः खलु दर्शिता वै ।
 नीताः सुखस्य भवने परमां च कोटिं
 यद्दर्शनं तव भवानि महाप्रभावम् ॥ ३४

नाहं भवो न च विरिञ्चि विवेद मातः
 कोऽन्यो हि वेत्ति चरितं तव दुर्विभाव्यम् ।
 कानीह सन्ति भुवनानि महाप्रभावे
 ह्यास्मिन् भवानि रचिते रचनाकलापे ॥ ३५

अस्माभिरत्र भुवने हरिरन्य एव
 दृष्टः शिवः कमलजः प्रथितप्रभावः ।
 अन्येषु देवि भुवनेषु न सन्ति किं ते
 किं विद्म देवि विततं तव सुप्रभावम् ॥ ३६

याचेऽम्ब तेऽङ्घ्रिकमलं प्रणिपत्य कामं
 चित्ते सदा वसतु रूपमिदं तवैतत् ।
 नामापि वक्त्रकुहरे सततं तवैव
 संदर्शनं तव पदाम्बुजयोः सदैव ॥ ३७

भृत्योऽयमस्ति सततं मयि भावनीयं
 त्वां स्वामिनीति मनसा ननु चिन्तयामि ।
 एषाऽऽवयोरविरता किल देवि भूयाद्
 व्याप्तिः सदैव जननीसुतयोरिवार्ये ॥ ३८

त्वं वेत्सि सर्वमखिलं भुवनप्रपञ्चं
 सर्वज्ञता परिसमाप्तिनितान्तभूमिः ।
 किं पामरेण जगदम्ब निवेदनीयं
 यद्युक्तमाचर भवानि तवेङ्गितं स्यात् ॥ ३९

ब्रह्मा सृजत्यवति विष्णुरुमापतिश्च
 संहारकारक इयं तु जने प्रसिद्धिः ।
 किं सत्यमेतदपि देवि तवेच्छया वै
 कर्तुं क्षमा वयमजे तव शक्तियुक्ताः ॥ ४०

धात्री धराधरसुते न जगद्विभर्ति
 आधारशक्तिरखिलं तव वै विभर्ति ।
 सूर्योऽपि भाति वरदे प्रभया युतस्ते
 त्वं सर्वमेतदखिलं विरजा विभासि ॥ ४१

ब्रह्माऽहमीश्वरवरः किल ते प्रभावात्
 सर्वे वयं जनियुता न यदा तु नित्याः ।
 केऽन्ये सुराः शतमखप्रमुखाश्च नित्या
 नित्या त्वमेव जननी प्रकृतिः पुराणा ॥ ४२

त्वं चेद्भवानि दयसे पुरुषं पुराणं
 जानेऽहमद्य तव संनिधिगः सदैव ।
 नोचेदहं विभुरनादिरनीह ईशो
 विश्वात्मधीरिति तमः प्रकृतिः सदैव ॥ ४३

विद्या त्वमेव ननु बुद्धिमतां नराणां
 शक्तिस्त्वमेव किल शक्तिमतां सदैव ।
 त्वं कीर्तिकान्तिकमलामलतुष्टिरूपा
 मुक्तिप्रदा विरतिरेव मनुष्यलोके ॥ ४४

गायत्र्यसि प्रथमवेदकला त्वमेव
 स्वाहा स्वधा भगवती सगुणार्धमात्रा ।
 आम्नाय एव विहितो निगमो भवत्या
 संजीवनाय सततं सुरपूर्वजानाम् ॥ ४५

मोक्षार्थमेव रचयस्यखिलं प्रपञ्चं
 तेषां गताः खलु यतो ननु जीवभावम् ।
 अंशा अनादिनिधनस्य किलानघस्य
 पूर्णार्णवस्य वितता हि यथा तरङ्गाः ॥ ४६

जीवो यदा तु परिवेत्ति तवैव कृत्यं
 त्वं संहरस्यखिलमेतदिति प्रसिद्धम् ।
 नाट्यं नटेन रचितं वितथेऽन्तरङ्गे
 कार्ये कृते विरमसे प्रथितप्रभावा ॥ ४७

त्राता त्वमेव मम मोहमयाद् भवाब्धे -
 स्वामम्बिके सततमेमि महार्तिदै च ।
 रागादिभिर्विरचिते वितथे किलान्ते
 मामेव पाहि बहुदुःखकरे च काले ॥ ४८

नमो देवि महाविद्ये नमामि चरणौ तव
 सदा ज्ञानप्रकाशं मे देहि सर्वार्थदे शिवे ॥ ४९

Translation

[Once Lord Viṣṇu, changed into feminine form propiciated great goddess Śrī Bhuvaneśvarī (overlady of the all regions) (in the following words (26)].

Śrī Bhagavān said : Salutation to goddess Prakṛti, continuous obeisance to creatress; salutation to auspicious one, salutation again and again to giver of desires. Thou art Vṛddhi (increase) and Siddhi (success). I bow down to thee (27)

Salutation to the goddess who is of the nature of *sat* (everlasting existence), *cit* (knowledge) and *Ānanda* (bliss) and *Araṇi* (origin) of the world. Salutation again and again to Bhuvaneśī (lord of the world) and creatrix of five fold things (creation, preservation, dissolution, order, and favour to created beings) (28)

Thou art of the form of the dwelling seat of all (things) and thou art the supreme soul (immovable, unchangeable and perpetually the same). I bow down to thee again and again. Thou art the meaning of the half a syllable and thou art the *Hṛllekhā* (grief or pleasure of the heart). Obeisance to thee again and again (29)

O mother ! Today I realise that this whole (universe) is stationed in thee and from thee it originates and dissolves in thee. In its creation thy power is visible. Now I know that verily thou art formed of all the *lokas* (regions) (30)

Extending all these transformations comprised of real (*sat*) and unreal (*asat*) thou show it intact to Puruṣa at the (proper time). By sixteen and seven elements for our amusement thou appear like a mirage (31)

O mother ! without thee no object. becomes visible. Thou art stationed pervading this, whole (universe). It is the reason why wise man says that without śakti (power) Puruṣa (the highest soul) can not act, (32)

O Goddess ! through thy efficacy thou regularly satisfy and createst the whole universe. At the time of dissolution thou swiftly devour (all which is created). Who knows thy powers ? (No body is able to fathom 'thy powers). (33)

O mother ! By thee we were protected from (demons) Mādhū and Kaiṭābha. By thee extended regions of thine have been shown, to us. In thy house (maṇidvīpa) we have been brought to extreme position of joy and happiness because looking at thee (i.e. your appearance) has great efficacy. (34)

O mother! neither myself, nor Śiva nor Brahman are able to know thy inconceivable deeds then who else can know ? Bhavāni ! O thou having great powers ! who knows how many more than the several regions (seen by us in the nails of thy feet) exist in thy heap of creations (35)

O Goddess ! in this region (of thine) another Viṣṇu, another Śiva and another Brahman of great majesty have been seen by us. Who knows in other regions how many (such Brahman etc) are ? Thy great majesty is extended all over. (36)

O Mother ! I bow down thoroughly to thy lotus feet and beg to thee that this form of thine always remain in my mind. Thy name should always be in my mouth and Thy lotus feet should always be visible. (37)

O Mother ! may thou always treat me as Thy servant and I always contemlae in my mind on thee as my goddess. O Great one ! may this relation of mother and son always remain between thee and me (38)

O Mother of the world ! there is nothing in the world which is unknown to Thee because Thou art the only Omniscient. O Bhavāni ! then what is to proclaimed by my wicked self. Now whatever Thou desirest and think proper do. (39)

It is famous among the people that Brahman creates, Viṣṇu preserves and Maheśvara annihilates (the creation). Is it true ? It is through Thy desire O Unborn one ! that endowed with Thy power we are able to perform it (as our duties). (40)

O Daughter of mountain (Himalayas) ! this earth is not supporting this universe, it is Thy holding power that is holding all this. O grantress of boons ! even sun when endowed with thy lustre shines. Thou stainless make shine all this (41)

When Brahman, myself and Maheśvara are not eternal but take birth through thy power, then who other gods headed by Indra are eternal. O mother ! thou art only eternal and ancient Prakṛti (42)

Now I am in thy close contact and realise that thou show mercy (dost impart knowledge of Brahman) to ancient Puruṣa (and He realises his true nature); otherwise He will remain always under ignorance that He is mighty, beginningless, desireless, lord and universal knowledge. (43)

Surely; thou art knowledge (vidyā) of the learned people and might (śakti) of the powerful (mighty) persons, thou art fame (kīrti), lustre (kānti), wealth (kamalā) and pure (Amalā-spotless), satisfaction (Tuṣṭi). In the world of man thou art freedom from worldly attachment and Muktirūpā (freedom from bondage of life and death). (44)

Thou art the Gāyatrī mantra, the first part (origin) of the Veda, Svāhā (to be used in offering of oblations to the gods), Svadhā (used in oblations of manes), Bhagavatī, possessed of attributes and Ardhamātrā (Half syllable or consonant). It is thou that givest Āmnāya (Veda) and Nigama (śāstra ?) for the preservation of Devas and Brāhmanas. (45)

Thou create this whole phenomenon of visible universe for the liberation of souls (Jīvas). Those Jīvas are the parts of Brahman which is beginningless, endless and pure (sinless) as the extensive waves are the parts of the complete ocean. (46)

When Jīva knows that all this is thy creation and thou destroyest all this creation as in theatre actor performs, a drama enacted on a false theatre thou of famous majesty then after thy actions thou retire. (Then Jīva becomes free from bondage) (47)

O mother ! thou art the protector of myself from this worldly ocean of delusion. I continuously approach to thee. Kindly protect me at the time of most painful and sorrowful end of my life which is comprised of great passion etc. (48)

O Goddess ! O Mahāvidyā ! I make my obeisance to thee; I bow down to thy feet. O Śive ! O giver of all wealth ! Give me always light of knowledge. (48)

O Goddess ! salutation to thee; O Mahavidye ! I make my obeisance to thy feet. O giver of all objects, O auspicious one ! always give me the light of knowledge. (49)

– Dr. Ganga Sagar Rai

THE RĀMĀYAṆA AND THE PROBLEM OF AN "ASIAN"
CULTURAL AREA: VĀLMIKI'S VALUES IN INDIA AND
BEYOND"

By

R. P. GOLDMAN

[अस्मिन् निबन्धे विदुषा लेखकेन महर्षिवाल्मीकिविरचितस्याद्यकाव्यस्य रामायणस्य महत्त्व-प्रभाव-प्रसारविषये सारगर्भितं विवेचनं प्रस्तुतम् । रामायणं न केवलं भारतीयसंस्कृतेर्धर्मस्य प्राचीनतमो विशिष्टग्रन्थो अपितु रामकथाया समस्तदक्षिण-पूर्वएशियाप्रदेशे प्रचारकोऽपि वर्तते । विविधदेशेषु विभिन्नजातिषु विविध-धर्मानुयायिजनेषु च यादृशो ग्रन्थस्यास्य दृश्यते प्रभावस्तादृशः प्रभावो न विद्यते ग्रन्थान्तराणाम् । वस्तुतो रामस्य महच्चरितस्य ग्रन्थोऽयं न केवलमुद्घाटकोऽपि तु प्रचारकोऽपि । अस्मिन् निबन्धे विदुषा लेखकेन तर्कपुरस्सरं सप्रमाणं च एतद् विषये स्वविचाराः प्रस्तुताः]

कूजन्तं राम रामेति मधुरं मधुराक्षरम् ।
आरुह्य कविताशाखां वन्दे वाल्मीकिकोकिलम् ॥
वाल्मीकेर्मुनिसिंहस्य कवितावनचारिणः ।
श्रृण्वन् रामकथानादं को न याति परां गतिम् ॥
यः पिबन् सततं रामचरितामृतसागरम् ।
अतृप्तस्तं मुनिं वन्दे प्राचेतसमकल्मषम् ॥

I pay homage to the cuckoo, Vālmīki who, having
ascended the tree of poetry, perches there sweetly
warbling the sweet song, "Rāma, Rāma!"

For who, having once heard the tale of Rāma, the roar of
Vālmīki, lion among sages, who ranges the woodlands of
poetry, would not attain the highest Bliss?

So I make my obeisance to the blameless sage
Prācetasā, who drinks incessantly from the ocean of the
nectar of the tale of Rāma, and yet is never sated.

The art critic Holland Cotter began his review in the *New York Times*¹ of the 1999 "International Asian Art Fair," (an annual New York event since 1996) with the following comment: "'Asia' doesn't exist and it never has. It isn't a place or a culture; it's a geopolitical fiction, a patchwork of people, climates and languages stitched together lightly, and only here and there, by the bright thread of Buddhism." Leaving aside the fact that, substituting Christianity for Buddhism, Cotter's remark might equally plausibly refer to Europe, it does raise a number of theoretical as well as practical difficulties in considering how to conceptualize Asia as a distinctive area of scholarly investigation.

For one thing, the term "Asia" itself is loosely theorized and is subject to various forms of contestation on both intellectual as well as political grounds. The term which seems innocuous at first glance as a more or less objective reference to simple geography has in many cases only relatively recently (in the post-Said era, let us say) supplanted the once similarly innocuous-seeming but now deeply problematic term "Orient." In the academic arena, moreover, this latter term was however somewhat nebulous in its reference, a reference that varied significantly from one university to another. At the University of Pennsylvania, when I was a graduate student there, the Department of Oriental Studies included the fields of Sinology, Japanology, Indology and studies of the ancient Near East. At Berkeley, the Department of Oriental Languages (subsequently re-named the Department of East Asian Languages and then the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures) covers (as its current name indicates) only the languages and literatures of East Asia. The University of Chicago's famous Oriental Institute deals exclusively with the languages and texts of the ancient Near East.

In some cases the term "Oriental" also carried with it an implicit chronological as well as a geographical reference, used often only to describe the study of ancient and even extinct languages as opposed to the more modern languages and cultures of the "Orient" however that domain was geographically limited. Thus while Biblical Hebrew was an oriental subject at Chicago, the modern language belonged to Near Eastern Studies.

1. Cotter, Holland "Dizzying Realm of Asian Art". *New York Times*. Friday, March 26, 1999 Section B, p. 33.

Similarly, while Sanskrit was oriental at Penn, Hindi was South Asian. Consider also the fact that the American Oriental Society, America's oldest scholarly association dealing with Asia, includes under its aegis the languages, literatures, and religions of South, Southeast, East, North, West and Central Asia—in short all of Asia as we understand it geographically--while the Association for Asian Studies, America's largest such association, excludes West Asia from its purview.

In popular and bureaucratic parlance, the term "Asian" generally refers to the peoples and cultures of East and Southeast Asia, especially China, Japan, Korea, Viet Nam, the Phillipines etc. and in the context of such phenomena as preferences, set-asides and affirmative action this has not infrequently led to the exclusion of, for example, people of South Asian origin who, in the course of their history as an immigrant group in the United States, have, at different periods, been considered "oriental" and, in apparent contrast, "Caucasian."

Thus we see that the problematic term "oriental" which once seemed so transparent in its meaning, is in fact taken in one institution after another, to refer to different geographical areas and separate historical periods. By contrast the term "Asian" appears to be more precise in its reference and far less open to interpretation. But is it really? For one thing, as we see with reference to the AAS and AOS, even Asia can be defined differently in the scholarly imagination. Then, too, in the increasingly global and transnational universe in which we live Asia, in terms of its peoples, languages, economies and cultures is hardly restricted to any geographical region.

Finally, when we reflect upon the vast, ethnic, linguistic, religious, cultural, historical etc. diversity of the immense Asian (really, of course Eurasian) landmass, we must consider to what extent the term is really useful as anything other than a convenient geographical designation. In a political-economic climate in which one has heard, in recent years, of Asian models and Asian values we may with reason ask if there is really any meaningful sense in which a Pakistani peasant has anything more in common as a function of his imagined "Asian-ness" with, say, a "salaryman" in Osaka or a bureaucrat in Beijing than the latter two would have with their European or American counterparts? In short does the term "Asian" really have more than a stereotypical value when used to

refer to customs, social values, aesthetic norms etc. or are there in fact, some set of definable cultural norms and values that justify thinking about Asia in a rapidly globalizing world as anything more than a geographical term?

These questions are not idle ones. They have increased in relevance with the emergence of some Asian nations into economic, geostrategic and political prominence in recent decades and the simultaneous dramatic increase in Asian populations in the United States and their increasingly critical role in the economic, scientific, medical, artistic and intellectual life of this nation. They come too against a background of a still overwhelmingly Eurocentric academic environment in this country in which Asia or vast geographical regions of the continent are bundled into one or a few small university departments in which a handful of faculty are expected to cover a wide variety of subjects covering hundreds or even thousands of years while, by way of contrast, there may be separate departments or programs for each European language in which members of large faculties may be free to specialize in a single decade, or genre or, not infrequently, a single author. Beyond the academy critical political matters (human rights and technology transfer in China, nuclearization of India and Pakistan, North Korea), economic concerns (recession in Japan and SEA) and social issues ("model" minorities, affirmative action, anti-immigration sentiment) continue to loom very large in the American consciousness. As new stereotypes concerning work ethic, discipline and obsessions with education, parental control and economic matters displace the older ones of Oriental despotism, the indolent and mystical East etc. it is, I would suggest, an appropriate moment in which to reexamine our conceptions of Asia as a cultural area with an eye towards determining whether there are meaningful areas of inquiry that could help to shed light on the question of whether there is any value at all to the term Asian other than those of geography, convenience, and stereotyping.

One way to open perhaps a small window onto this complex area, I believe, is to explore some of the reasons for the extraordinary spread and popularity of one of Asia's most characteristic and enduring cultural phenomena, the virtually unique spectrum of literary, performative, plastic, and religious artifacts that we call collectively the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

I would like, therefore, to turn my attention to certain aspects of one of my own areas of special interest and what many, myself included,

regard as the oldest surviving version of the Rāma story, *the Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa*. In so doing I will attempt to highlight some of the aspects of this great work and to evaluate them as possible causes for two phenomena. The first of these is the unparalleled ease with which the Rāmāyaṇa lent itself to a myriad of adaptations to root itself in so many different Asian cultures. The second is its lack of similar success in penetrating the cultures and languages of ancient and medieval Europe while other corpora of Sanskrit and Middle Indic narratives appear to have readily spread to and naturalized themselves throughout the Mediterranean world and Western Europe.

The monumental Sanskrit epic poem entitled the *Rāmāyaṇa* and attributed to the legendary poet-sage Vālmiki, appears to have been originally composed around the middle of the first millennium BCE.² Despite the fact that (at least until the era of the modern Asian Diaspora and the attendant exposure of western audiences to a variety of Asian performing arts) the story had remained virtually unknown to all but a tiny scholarly community in the West, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and its virtually innumerable retellings in one form or another have, since that time, become, to a greater or lesser degree, part of the cultural heritage of virtually all regions of Asia. Indeed in this respect the *Rāmāyaṇa*, in its most broadly conceived form, may be rivaled only by Cotter's "bright thread of Buddhism" in all of its equally numerous varieties. In fact the two cultural phenomena, Buddhism and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, are to at least some extent interconnected and have much the same geographical range in the pre-modern world.

What I would like to attempt to do this afternoon is to examine some of the particular features of the Vālmiki *Rāmāyaṇa* and subsequent versions of the Rāma story, that have enabled it to travel so freely and widely across geographic, linguistic, ethnic, class, and religious barriers to become, in many respects, as close to being a pan-Asian text as we can identify, while at the same time failing to penetrate deeply³ the cultures of the west.

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2. The dating of the poem is complicated by the lack of any independent historical evidence concerning its composition and by the fact that it grew by stages over what appears to have been a considerable period of time. For recent discussions of the question see Goldman, R.P. *The Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmiki: Volume I: Bālakāṇḍa*. Princeton. Princeton University Press. 1984. pp. 14-23 and Brockington, John *The Sanskrit Epics* Leiden, Brill 1998. pp. 379-383 etc.
 3. By "deeply" here I mean to refer to the way in which a text or tradition like the *Rāmāyaṇa* becomes fully naturalized in a culture other than the one from which it originated. This would be in contrast to traditions that are read or performed for or by ethnic diasporic communities, religious converts, and consumers of ethnic arts etc.

In order to do this I will begin about the epic poem of Vālmīki in particular and then move on to a discussion of some of its central concerns which have enabled the Rāma legend to become "naturalized" as it were in a dazzling variety of religious, linguistic, and social milieus in South Asia as well as far-flung regions of the continent that have been perhaps less hospitable to other artifacts of Indic culture.

If educated Westerners know anything at all of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, they would generally recognize it as an epic poem held in high esteem as a religious text of Hinduism. Some, who follow international news, might be aware that it has been placed in recent decades at the center of the politics of religious nationalism in India. Others with a bit more specialized interest in South Asian culture or religion would additionally be aware that it is one of the primary literary sources for the specifically Vaiṣṇava theological motif of the *avatāra*. This is the periodic "descent" into history and the world on the part of the supreme divinity, the Lord Viṣṇu, in one form or another in order to reestablish the dominance of righteousness over evil which has been subverted through the agency of a powerful, demonic figure, who, through the acquisition of a divine boon of some kind this figure, has managed to tip the moral balance of the universe in favor of what Darth Vader referred to as "the dark side." This doctrine of the *avatāra* is perhaps best known and most succinctly stated in its often quoted formulation from the *Bhagavad Gītā* (4.7-8).

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ।
परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ॥
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे ॥

"Whenever righteousness declines, O Bhārata, and unrighteousness is rampant, I project myself into the world. It is for the protection of the virtuous and the destruction of the wicked—that is for the re-establishment of righteousness—that I take birth age after age".

People with such a sense of what the *Rāmāyaṇa* is, are of course quite correct as far as their information goes. For without a doubt the representation of Rāma as an incarnation of the supreme Godhead come to earth in human form to rid the world of the monster Rāvana and his

demonic legions is the central theme of the epic in its most widely known versions in Hindu India. This theme is absolutely central to the Sanskrit poem of Vālmīki, and of numerous influential devotional re-tellings of the tale such as the 16th century Avadhi Hindi *Rāmaaritamānasa* of the poet-saint Tulsī Dās and countless other literary and folk versions in the many languages of the Indian subcontinent.

A closer look, however, at the Indic materials suggests that the Rāma story was popular and widely circulated in a variety of contexts where the divinity of its hero was either only a collateral issue or even entirely antithetical to the purposes and interests of the authors and audiences of its various versions. Consider, for example, what is perhaps the oldest surviving re-telling of Vālmīki's tale, the *Rāmopākhyāna* of the *Mahābhārata*. This version occupies nine full chapters (MBh. 3. 257-76) of the great Sanskrit epic's third Book, the *Āraṇyaka Parvan*. The narrator acknowledges briefly the avatāric character of Rāma but clearly is interested in using the narrative more as an exemplary tale. For the *Mahābhārata* poet Rāma's virtues of self-sacrifice, filial devotion and stoic endurance in the face of adversity are extolled chiefly as an exhortation to the epic hero, Yudhiṣṭhira, who, having suffered hardships similar to those of Rāma is inclined to complain about them. This is hardly a devotee's celebration of God's earthly incarnation. Moreover, within the capacious boundaries of Hinduism the Rāma legend has been often used as a vehicle for the magnification of divinities other than Visnu. Thus as W.L. Smith ⁴ and others have pointed out, there are numerous versions of the story, largely in Eastern India, that have been composed by adherents of Śākta schools of theology in which the power of the mother Goddess is regarded as far greater than that of any male divinity. In such versions, Rāma, incarnation and hero though he may be, is by no means omnipotent. On the contrary, he is often represented as running into insuperable difficulties and superior adversaries from which he must be rescued by his spouse, Sītā, his *śakti* who is, in the more familiar Vaisnava versions, generally represented as a devoted, but rather passive and even somewhat helpless creature.

4. Smith, W. L. *Rāmāyaṇa Traditions in Eastern India: Assam, Bengal, Orissa*. 1988
Stockholm: Department of Indology, University of Stockholm.

But the *Rāmāyaṇa* in India is by no means popular only among the adherents of the various sectarian divisions of Hinduism. The tale and the figure of its hero were of considerable importance to the followers of ancient India's two great non-Hindu religious traditions, Buddhism and Jainism. Moreover, this is so despite the fact that both religions steadfastly deny the divinity or salvific power of Rāma or indeed any of the Vaiṣṇava *avatāras* even if the Vaiṣṇavas will later not hesitate to appropriate the Buddha as an *avatāra* himself.

The Rāma story was adapted early on by the Buddhist authors in whose works its various parts come to figure significantly in the important collection of Jātaka tales which provides a transmigrational biography of the previous births of the Buddha. One of these tales, the *Dasaratha Jātaka*, recounts a version of the epic story that completely excises its central *avatāric* narrative of the rapacious demon king and his abduction of Sītā, focusing instead on Rāma Paṇḍita's legendary self-control as an example of this cardinal Buddhist virtue. In another, the *Sāma Jātaka*, the *Ayodhyā Kāṇḍa* episode in which the banishment of Rāma is attributed to a curse laid upon his father for having, in his youth, accidentally slain the son of a blind ascetic couple is reworked with a different cast of characters. In these stories the hero of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is represented one of the earlier incarnations of the bodhisattva the person destined to one day attain enlightenment. Moreover, Vālmīki's poem is known to and admired by the first century CE Buddhist poet Aśvaghosa who not only alludes to the *Rāmāyaṇa*'s representation of Vālmīki as the First Poet but also clearly uses his poem as the model for his poetic biography of the Buddha, the *Buddhacarita*.

Jain authors have been especially fond of the Rāma legend, regarding Rāma not, of course, as an *avatāra* of Godhead, but as one of the sixty-three *śalākāpuruṣas*, or exemplary Jain laymen and the hero of numerous Jain *Rāmāyaṇas* in both Sanskrit and Prakrit. Here even the martial character of the epic warrior hero, the scourge of the demonic *rākṣasas* must give way before the Jain imperative of *ahiṃsā* or non-injury to all living beings. Thus the Hindu *avatāra*'s central and most defining feat, the slaughter of his ten-headed nemesis, Rāvaṇa, is, in Jaina versions of the tale, assigned to his loyal younger brother Lakṣmaṇa.

In these and similar ways, with numerous shifts of emphasis, religious and philosophical orientation, the Rāma story came, in time, to dominate

the folk, literary, and religious literatures of virtually every one of South Asia's numerous languages and regions. Similarly it comes to be one of the most commonly represented and influential themes in the plastic and performative arts from temple friezes and courtly miniature paintings to elaborate folk and dance dramas and contemporary film and video.

But the cultural saturation of the Rāma story is by no means confined to the Indian subcontinent. As is well known to students of Southeast Asia it has achieved a position of productive cultural centrality in virtually all of the countries of this far-flung and highly diverse region. In Burma, from at least the 11th century CE dramatic, prose and poetic courtly versions of the story extol Rāma as an idealized *bodhisattva*. Similarly in Buddhist Thailand, the *Rāmakien* becomes the foundational epic for the Ayutthayan dynasty (1409-1767) which names its dynasts after the epic hero (Rāma I, II etc.). At least six or seven poetic or dramatic versions of the story, many of which are attributed to the various King Rāmas are widely known and performed. In Laos the *Phra lak Phra Lam* and the *Gvāy Dvoraḥbī* give eloquent testimony to the localization and naturalization (to use Sachchidanand Sahai's phrase) of the epic in a variety of milieus. In Islamic Malaysia and Indonesia, as is well known, the Rāma story in the form of texts such as the *Hikayat Seri Rāma*, the Javanese *Rāmāyaṇa Kakawin*, the widespread and diverse styles of *wayang* or shadow puppet theater, and the temple sculptures of such complexes as Prambanan have established the story of Rāma, there regarded as the model of an ideal Islamic prince, as one of the region's principal cultural artifacts and acculturative devices. The *Rāmāyaṇa* tradition is, as I noted, well attested in Burma in the performance tradition of the *Yāma-pwe* and has deeply saturated traditional Cambodian culture in a wide variety of forms including various literary renderings of the Rāma story, the *Ramakerti* from around the 16th century CE and the famous reliefs at Angkor Wat. In Sri Laṅkā the literary rendering of the story attributed to the sixth century CE monarch Kumāradāsa, the *Jānakīharaṇa*, is thought to be the earliest Sanskrit work to have been composed in that country. Even as far as the Philippines we find texts such as the *Maharadia Lawana*, current among the Maranao ethnic group from perhaps the 17th century discovered and studied by Juan Francisco⁵ which have kept the story, derived here no doubt from Malay sources, alive.

5. Francisco, Juan R. 1980. The Rāmāyaṇa in the Philippines. In V. Raghavan, ed. *The Ramayana Tradition in Asia*, 155-177. Delhi: Sahitya Akademi.

But the *Rāmāyana* story has spread in other directions as well. It has traveled to the West where there are a number of poorly studied Persian versions of the tale and, notably to the North and East. Scholars including de Jong and others have studied and translated the Tibetan manuscripts of the *Rāmāyaṇa* found at Tun-huang while the Mongolian scholar, T.S. Damdinsuren⁶ has discovered and studied four versions, of varying length, in Mongolian as well as three Tibetan versions. Khotanese versions have been found at Tun-huang as well, Mongolian versions appear to have come from Tibet and their influence can in turn be found as far north as Central Asia as a Kalmuk folk version of the epic preserved in manuscript form in the Siberian branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences.⁷

Although the presence and the destiny of the *Rāmāyana* story in East Asia is harder to trace than in some other areas of the continent where its influence is clear and pervasive, it is no less real and may, in some ways, be more interesting. There can be little doubt that some versions, particularly those found in the *Jātakas* and other Buddhist sources would have been known to Chinese scholars from the early centuries CE. K'ang-seng-hui, for example is said to have translated *Jātaka* tales into Chinese in 251 CE and other versions followed in the ensuing centuries as the passion for the translation of Indic Buddhist texts into Chinese grew into a virtual industry. It is also well known, as mentioned above, the Tibetan and Khotanese texts of the *Rāmāyaṇa* were kept in the cave library at Tun-huang along with the *pien-wen* manuscripts of early Chinese literary texts⁸. Indeed, it has been a subject of extensive scholarly debate as to whether, and to what extent the character of the hero of the famous sixteenth century novel the *Hsi-yu chi*, the divine monkey, Sun Wu-k'ung and his antecedents in Chinese literature can have been inspired by the monkey divinity and hero of the *Rāmāyaṇa* tradition Hanuman who shares many of his characteristics and exploits.

From China, it is hardly surprising to note, versions of the *Rāma* legend made their way in time to Japan. The Japanese Sanskrit scholar

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6. Damdinsuren, T. S. 1980. *Ramayana in Mongolia*. In V. Raghavan, ed. *The Ramayana Tradition in Asia*, 653-9. Delhi: Sahitya Akademi.
 7. Lokesh Chandra, "Rāmāyaṇa, the Epic of Asia" in the *Ramayana Tradition in Asia*, V. Raghavan, ed. Sahitya Akademi Delhi 1980. pp. 651-2.
 8. Dudbridge, Glen, *The Hsi-yu chi. A Study of Antecedents to the Sixteenth-Century Chinese Novel*. 1970. Cambridge University Press. p. 160-161.

Minoru Hara⁹ has studied two interesting texts derived from Chinese Buddhist sources, one an abridgement of the Rāma legend found in the twelfth century collection of popular tales the *Hobutsushū* of Tairano Yasuyori which appears to derive from a Chinese canonical *Liu-po-lo-mi-ching* (= *Liu-tu-tsi-ching* = *Rokudojikkyo*, *The Six Pāramitā Sūtra*) and the other, a rendering of the Rāmāyaṇa's episode in which Dāśaratha is cursed for accidentally killing a blind ascetic couple's son from a tenth century collection of tales, the *Samboekotoba* of Minamoto Tamenori derived, no doubt from the canonical version of the *Sāma Jātaka* which I mentioned earlier. In addition to these Buddhist canonical sources, which inspired, it would seem, popular literary authors, Hara hypothesizes that the Rāma story may have made its way into popular or courtly circulation directly from the oral versions narrated by Indian savants like Bharadvāja Bodhisena who were known to have visited Japan from the eighth century onwards.¹⁰

This extraordinary spread of the Rāma story with all of its innumerable local variations and its naturalization in the many cultures where it found a home is fairly well known. What needs to be explored is the question of what it is about the *Rāmāyaṇa* in all of its possible variations that has made it so appealing throughout the immense distances and diversity of Asia and yet so utterly alien to the peoples of neighboring regions. Why, for example, do we not find a Greek or a Roman or an Arab *Rāmāyaṇa*? The Greeks had significant cultural, military and political relations with India at least from the time of Alexander and the Hellenistic successor kingdoms of the Indian northwest persisted for centuries after his time. There is evidence of artistic and even philosophical-religious exchange between the cultures and the Greeks surely appreciated a good epic tale of love and war. The Romans maintained lively commercial relationships with India in the first centuries CE and exotic eastern religions such as Mithraism and later Christianity became powerful forces in Imperial Rome. The Arabs too established close trading relationships across the Arabian Sea and were among the

9. Hara, Minoru, 1983. Rama Stories in China and Japan : A Comparison. In K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar, ed. *Asian Variations in Ramayana*, 340-356. Delhi : Sahitya Akademi.

10. Hara, Minoru. "Rama Stories in China and Japan : A Comparison". In *Asian Variations in Ramayana* K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar, ed. Sahitya Akademi Delhi 1983 pp. 340-356.

bearers of the elaborate story and fable literature of Hindustan that spread so widely and productively throughout the Middle East and Europe. But in none of these traditions do we find anything that can realistically be called a direct representation in literature, religion or art of any known version of the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

Why is this? The diversity of the manifestations of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in Asia would appear to suggest that there are certain features of the older versions of the story that can be ruled out as reasons for its appeal to some cultures and its lack of appeal to others. For example we can with some certainty rule out linguistic affinity. This old Indo-Aryan saga spread widely and easily across many major linguistic families including Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Munda, Tibeto-Burmese, Altaic, Malay-Indonesian to name a few. The same can be said of some hypothetical boundaries of literary genres. The South and Southeast Asian cultural universes are particularly fond of long epic poetic narratives while those of East Asia are stereotypically said not to favor this genre. Yet the tale has spread widely in a variety of genres through many parts of East Asia while it appears to have made no impression on the epic-friendly cultures of the Near East and Mediterranean world. Religion, too, must be discarded as an index of the epic's spread. Although it is doubtless true that the Rāma story has spread to most of the countries stitched together—to use Cotter's phrase—by the "bright thread of Buddhism," and that, moreover the medium for this spread was, especially in East Asia, Buddhist texts, the story has become enormously popular amongst non-Buddhist groups, Hindus, Jains, Christians, Muslims, Parsis and Sikhs in South Asia. Similarly, it emerged as one of the premier cultural artifacts of the Islamic peoples of insular and peninsular Southeast Asia and the Buddhist cultures of the mainland. With this as a background, let me turn to a brief discussion of some of the critical elements in Vālmiki's elaborate rendition of the *Rāmākathā* into some 50,000 lines of epic Sanskrit verse. For, as I noted above, it is this text that first fixes the basic outlines of the story and is the probable source, directly or indirectly for all, other versions.

The immense success of the Vālmiki *Rāmāyaṇa* and its perennial power to inspire re-workings in mainstream Hindu (particularly Vaiṣṇava) India derives, I believe, from its influence, at varying periods, in four critical areas of life : the religious, the political, the aesthetic, and the social.

The first three of these, although immensely important in establishing the prestige of the story and accounting for its diffusion in many contexts in India, are not, in my opinion, significant factors in the spread of the story to other parts of Asia. I have also discussed them elsewhere and so will touch upon them only briefly in the present context.

As noted above, for Vālmīki, Tulasī Dās etc. and hundreds of millions of Hindus who know and love their poems, the epic hero Rāma is a manifestation of God on earth. This factor, however, is of little or no importance to the authors and audiences of Jain, Buddhist, and Islamic versions of the tale except insofar as the resonance of its hero as an extraordinary and exemplary man or a bodhisattva may be seen as having originally recommended the story to wider, non-Hindu audiences.

Closely related to the religious reading of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is the way in which the text has been read, at least since the advent of Islam as a political force in the Indian subcontinent, as a kind of national epic; the saga of Aryan or Hindu India's struggle against alien and menacing political forces represented in the narrative as the barbaric and fearsome *rākṣasa-s*, the implacable foes of brahmanical culture and civilization. This reading of the story has been popular from the twelfth or thirteenth centuries onward and is tied closely to the history of the incultation of Rāma as a temple divinity and his homology with a distinctly and self-consciously Hindu conception of monarchy that arises apparently in response to the threat posed by the powerful and unassimilable forces of Muslim state power in India. It is also deeply tied up with the current resurgence of militant forms of Hindu nationalism in India which used the *Rāmāyaṇa* as its principal rallying strategy in the campaign to destroy the sixteenth century Babri Masjid with is said to have been built on the ruins of a destroyed Hindu temple erected at Rāma's actual birthplace in the pilgrimage town of Ayodhyā. Here the *avatāra* Rāma's vow, as represented in Tulasī Dās' immensely popular *Rāmāyaṇ*, to rid the land of alien demonic forces, is explicitly read by political orators of the Hindu Right as a charter to call for the conversion, subjugation or expulsion of India's huge Muslim minority.¹¹ Here again, this reading of the poem is part of a particular historically conditioned world view of Indian

11. Pollock, Sheldon, "Rāmāyaṇa and Political Imagination in India" *Journal of Asian Studies* 52, no. 2 (May 1993) 261-297.

Hinduism and can hardly be seen as related to or as a reason for the spread of the Rāma tale to other parts of Asia.

The aesthetic component in the prestige and popularity of Vālmīki's and the monumental epic poem ascribed to him is absolutely unique within the realm of Sanskrit poetry and poetics. For if the poet and his poem have not been regarded universally as the best that the tradition has to offer, there is nearly unanimous agreement that they are the first. The poem, as it has come down to us, is provided with prologue (*upodghāta*) in the form of a celebrated metapoetical narrative which tells how the sage Vālmīki, moving through a sequence of transformative personal experiences, the first edifying, the second emotive, and the third inspirational, is able to fuse them into the production of a new medium of expression, the poetic. This characterization of Vālmīki as the First Poet or Ādikavi and his Rāmāyana as the First Poem or Ādikāvya appears to have gained an acceptance that was both early and widespread so that at least as early as the era of the celebrated Buddhist poet Aśvaghōṣa¹² in the first or second century CE poets and rhetoricians writing in Sanskrit and non-Sanskritic traditions alike will offer conventional forms of homage to Vālmīki as standing at the head of the lineage of poets.

Clearly the accomplishment of Vālmīki is one that the literary culture of traditional India regards as foundational although, since the episode has received little detailed analysis¹³ from this perspective, it is not easy to say in exactly what ways the Rāmāyana was seen to be sharply differentiated from the textual milieu (the genre of *itihāsa-purāṇa*) from which it emerged. Nonetheless it seems clear, both from the *upodghāta* and later discussions of the events it describes, that the creation of true kāvya is possible only when there is an equal blending of the didactic (content) and the aesthetic (form) and the whole is imbued with a sublimated form of powerful emotionality (*rasa*). The *upodghāta* also seems to give great importance to the fact that the literary product thus engendered gains something of its claim to the title "poetry" through the very fact that it is performable and appreciable by performers and audiences *other* than the poet whose own, unsublimated, emotions originally triggered its production.

12. *Buddhacarita* 1.43 : Vālmīkir adau ca sasarja padyam.

13. An exception is Pollock's work in progress.

There is thus no doubt that part of the great prestige Vālmīki and his creation have enjoyed in South Asia derives from the idea that his work is divinely inspired and constitutes the first manifestation of the genre of poetry in the world. This is clear from the attention paid to him and his work in the copious Sanskrit literature on poetics and in later poetry and drama as well. Moreover Vālmiki's *upodghāta* first represents the Rāma story as a musical and performative piece and this may well have had some influence on the numerous renditions of its story in the folk theatre, dance drama and puppet theater traditions of South and Southeast Asia. Still, it is unlikely that either so general a feature as the performative aspect of the story or the highly culture-specific tradition of Vālmīki as the first poet could be seen as powerful factors in the broad diffusion of the Rāma story across Asia.

This leaves what I would call the social or the social-didactic element in Vālmīki's work and it is his, I would argue, that has been the most "exportable" feature of his poem. That is to say it is the one, which, in its innumerable local variations, has most centrally accounted for the spread and popularity of the Rāma legend through so much of Asia.

As it happens, Vālmīki's stated source, an oral narrative of Rāma's career to him by the divine seer Nārada makes no explicit reference to theology or indeed to any cosmic or even "national" mission on the part of its hero. It is instead the story of an ideal prince, endowed with all the virtues of an Aryan aristocrat of the Vedic age and narrated in response to a series of questions about the existence of an exemplary man. Rāma, so the story goes, willingly foregoes his royal inheritance in deference to a vow of his father and cheerfully accepts a life of banishment and penury rather than assert his own claims against his society's powerful imperatives of filial deference, truthfulness (*satya*), and righteousness (*dharma*). In exile, he suffers the agony of the abduction of his beloved wife, but exhibits exemplary fortitude and perseverance, mounting a successful military campaign to recover her and punish her abductors. Finally, he returns to his native land, regains his birthright and rules wisely as a righteous emperor, maintaining ritual order and social harmony throughout his vast realm through his exemplary conduct and his sagacious governance. In order for him to achieve this *summum bonum*—the creation and maintenance of a utopian state—he must once again prove to the world his valorization of austere conformance to the social,

moral and political codes by cruelly abandoning his beloved queen, once again sacrificing personal pleasure on the altar of public duty. There are to be no fairy tale endings for Vālmīki.

What Nārada's brief account gives us and Vālmīki's monumental epic embellishes and enriches is the classic and never superseded representation of the idealized South Asian personality. This is a man who is powerful, lovable and learned, capable of commanding nations and contesting even the gods, but always ready to renounce his own interests and desires in favor of those of the social and ritual order. Rāma is above all a prodigy of selfcontrol, of the mastery of the senses and the submission of the individual to the demands of the socius. In Freudian terms he is a living example of the triumph of the superego over the id. As such for countless generations, he has become one of Asian civilization's most recognizable exemplars of behavior, the antithesis of his demonic counterpart, the grotesque caricature of unbridled self-indulgence and contempt for legitimate authority, personified as the monstrous ten-headed *rāksasa* tyrant, Rāvaṇa.

It is this characterization, surely, and not his status for Vālmīki and the Hindu tradition as an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu, that has led Buddhist, Jain and Muslim authors and singers of tales throughout much of Asia to adapt the *Rāmakathā* to their own purposes and their own cultures. Thus Rāma came to be an exemplar of the Buddhist virtues of self-control in the *Dasaratha Jātaka* and the Thai *Ramakian*, and ideal practitioner of *ahiṃsā* in the Jain *Rāmāyaṇas*, a paragon of the clever and resourceful Islamic prince in the *wayang* dramas of the Malay-Indonesian world and the exemplar of sagacity, restraint, and self control of the Chinese and Japanese popular versions of the Jātaka tales. Moreover, in addition to his towering creations, Rāma the paragon of self-restraint and his radical antithesis, the licentious demon-king Rāvaṇa, Vālmīki has peopled his poem with a cast of characters designed to be exemplars of various kinds of both normative and sociopathic behavior in traditional South Asian society.

Thus Vālmīki's Sītā is characterized as the very archetype of the ideal South Asian wife, held up as a shining example to this day while Lakṣmaṇa has become the archetype of the perfectly deferential and devoted-younger brother similarly held up for emulation right down to the present. On the other hand Kaikeyī has become proverbial as the

insubordinate wife, the dreaded figure who, as the modern idiom has it, "eats her husband." Rāvaṇa, the gargantuan ten-headed monster is the grotesque paragon of unrestrained desire, the negative ego-ideal and quintessential "other" to Rāma. Hanumān, the powerful, wise and resourceful flying monkey becomes, in the *Rāmāyaṇa* tradition, the great model for the loyal, self-restrained and devoted servant subordinating everything to his master's interests. These paradigmatic figures, particularly the positive ego ideals like Rāma, Sītā, Bharata, Lakṣmaṇa and Hanumān are—with appropriate modifications to suit local customs and conceptions—clearly in harmony with the normative and culturally syntonic personalities as they are constructed by the great mainstream cultures of Asia, Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic, Taoist and Confucian. By the same token, in his negative or ambivalent characters such as the manipulative junior wife Kaikeyī, the vacillating sensualist Daśaratha, and above all the monstrous enemy of all social, moral, and religious constraints, Rāvaṇa, Vālmiki provides counter examples that serve only—through stark contrast—to more clearly highlight the virtues of his idealized characters.

Vālmiki's heroes and heroines, paragons of filial piety, fraternal loyalty, ascetic self-control, wifely devotion etc. abound in the religious and literary texts of the region. Heroes who are strong but compassionate, masterful but self-restrained, desirable but ascetic and who in short combine the ideal virtues of the warrior and the sage are heavily foregrounded in many Asian written and oral texts. Rāma in particular, whom the poet has crafted to combine the virility of the *kṣatriya* or warrior with the mildness, compassion and self-restraint of the brahmanical sage, is surely the most fully developed and widely admired of them all.¹⁴ In a sense his only real rival in the Asian tradition may well be the historical Buddha himself, the prince who has become both world renouncer and compassionate spiritual warrior. But the narrative of the life of the Buddha remained very closely tied to the systems of thought and religious praxis that he and his many followers developed. Thus he became an exemplar of the idealized personality only in those lands in

14. For an insightful exposition of the way in which Vālmiki's Rāma combines the qualities of the warrior and renunciant see Pollock, Sheldon, *The Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmiki: Volume II: Ayodhyākāṇḍa*. Princeton, Princeton University Press. 1986. pp. 64-73.

which, though a variety of historical circumstances, one or more schools of Buddhism became established. For non-Buddhists, if regarded at all, he could at best be seen, as in the tradition of the Vaiṣṇava *Purāṇas*, as merely a minor figure, an apostle of a false and delusive doctrine. Moreover, the life of the Buddha, exemplary though it may be, is that of a religious renunciant and a monastic pure and simple. It only partially serves the needs of diverse populations that range from *bhikṣus*, mandarins, princes and *paṇḍits* to merchants, villagers and peasants for entertainment, emotional and moral guidance. In this realm, the Rāma story with its tales of love, war, abducted princesses, ten-headed villains, monkey armies and flying palaces is unsurpassed. For it has provided audiences of dozens of countries belonging to all social classes and religions with an endlessly fascinating array of literary, artistic and performative media combining the spiritual and the moral with the excitement and romance of a complex epic narrative of love, intrigue and war.

If we set aside, for the moment, as I have tried to do, the vital theological, the aesthetic and the political layers of meaning of Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*, then we would have to say that the quintessential and defining moment of its hero's career is not the destruction of the demon king and his evil legions. Rather it is his stoic and unwavering obedience to his father's fateful promise to deprive him, on the eve of his consecration as king, of his rightful inheritance and banish him as a pauper to the wilderness for fourteen years. That this promise was deceitfully extorted from the unwilling monarch by a cunning wife only makes the heroism of Rāma in his unvarying adherence to the truth of his father's word the greater and the contrast between his self-control with the sensual infatuation of Daśaratha more stark.

What we discover through this kind of analysis, in effect, is that the *Rāmāyaṇa*, or at any rate the *Ramakathā* in whole and in parts, has had an unusually broad appeal in much of Asia precisely because the figure of Rāma—with all the variations and shifts that his character is subject to in the vast array of cultures in which his story has found currency—remains a recognizable and immensely attractive model for an idealized heroic personality. Critical, in most cases to this characterization is a particular pattern of behavior in which the hero subordinates his own interests to those of his father, sacrifices his personal gain in favor of the family and

the larger Aryan society, and chooses in most cases, renunciation over gratification. This is one of the most powerfully normative constructions of the ideal personality in traditional India and it clearly has considerable resonance in other Asian settings. Rāma is by far the most popular of such figures; but others of the type such as the *Mahābhārata's* Bhīṣma, Puru, and Rāma Jāmadagnya and the central figures in many *Jātaka* tales abound in the literature. It is, to look at it in another light, as I and some other scholars have suggested¹⁵ in fact a type of negative oedipal character that has been established as a particularly favored ego ideal in South Asia from vedic times until the present day. This type differs strongly from some other major heroic types in South Asia such as the socially more problematic, if equally fascinating, figure of Kṛṣṇa. Moreover, it contrasts very profoundly with a particularly favored western heroic type that we may call the positively oedipal. Figures of this kind from such ancient models as Achilles, Oedipus himself, Hamlet, and the heroes of innumerable western novels, plays and Hollywood films are generally rebellious against authority, challenging, overcoming and supplanting their fathers or father-figures and putting their own interests and emotions ahead of those of their family or social group.

Rāma, by way of contrast, cheerfully and unquestioningly accepts being wrongfully deprived of his rightful inheritance and goes quietly into exile without a word of blame for his father or even the scheming stepmother who has brought about his ruin. The Kaurava prince Devavrata unhesitatingly and voluntarily renounces both his right of succession to another imperial throne and the imperatives of marriage and progeny in order to gratify his father's infatuation for a fisher girl; and in so doing earns immortal fame as "Bhīṣma," the Awesome One.¹⁶ Puru willingly exchanges his youth and virility for his father's senescence and impotence.¹⁷ Rāma Jāmadagnya beheads his own mother to please his

15. Goldman, R.P. "Fathers, Sons, and Gurus Oedipal Conflict in the Sanskrit Epics." *Journal of Indian Philosophy*. Vol. 6, 1978, pp. 325-92. : Ramanujan A. K. "Is There an Indian Oedipus?" In *Vishnu on Freud's Desk: A Reader in Psychoanalysis and Hinduism*. T. G. Vaidyanathan and J. Kripal, eds. New Delhi Oxford University Press. 1998.

16. The *Mahābhārata* For the First Time Critically edited (hereafter *Mbh*). V. S. Sukthankar et al eds. Poona, The Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute. 1933-1972. 1. 94. 77-90.

17. *Mbh*. 1.79. 27-29.

jealous father.¹⁸ In compensation for these heroic acts of deference and renunciation these figures are, in the end, rewarded and are held up as culturally central models of behavior for centuries. By contrast Achilles sulks in his tent in a fit of pique over his king's appropriation of a prize of war, letting his friends and allies die rather than swallow the insult. Hamlet broods and agonizes and plots to do away with his wicked uncle. All self-respecting Hollywood action heroes thumb their noses at authority figures to pursue their own plots of intrigue and revenge. Painful thought it may be Luke Skywalker must overcome and destroy his dark father; and Oedipus is... well... Oedipus.

Thus, if we examine the most normative, popular and influential mythical and literary texts of Europe, from the Homeric epics onwards, we see a general favoring of and reflection of social and cultural norms that are quite different from those foregrounded in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and other foundational texts of the elite and popular literatures of many Asian nations. Figures of this latter type are exceptional in European literature and it is therefore hardly surprising that characters like Rāma or the Buddha, should resonate faintly if at all with western authors and audiences. Homer's creations, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* and Vālmiki's *Ādikāvya* are all Indo-European epic poems of approximately the same antiquity and with rather similar themes of quests and battles to recover lost heroines. But the delineation of their heroes and other central figures is as different as can be imagined: The *Rāmāyaṇa*, which in one form or another has spread so widely through a variety of scholarly, commercial and religious exchanges into the folk, and elite texts of most if not all of Asia appears to have made virtually no impression on the lands to the west of Iran just as the western epics, before the era of colonialism at any rate appear to have had little if any impact in Asia. Thus although we can find Persian, Philippine, Japanese and Mongolian versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* or at any rate of *Rāmāyaṇa* stories, and although the more picturesque tale and fable cycles (*Pañcatantra* etc. *Tales of Pilpay*, *Kalila and Dimnah*) of early India had enormous success in Europe and the Middle East we do not find Greek, Latin, Arabic, Celtic, Germanic or Slavic *Rāmāyaṇas*.

18. *Mbh.* 2. 116.13-18.

If this broad and very preliminary sketch of the distribution patterns of *Rāmāyaṇa*-related texts should hold up upon what I would hope would be further detailed studies by scholars specializing in the various languages and cultures of Asia, then it would, I think, give us some cause to resist Cotter's totalizing deconstruction of Asia as a cultural region. For it would appear that there are some areal social and cultural values other than his "bright thread of Buddhism" that, to one degree or another, mark Asia as something more than a random "patchwork of people, climates and languages."

All of this is not, of course, to try to revive an essentializing or stereotypical notion of a passive or spiritual East. Rather it is an effort to bring new kinds of considerations to bear upon the study of particular configurations of the continua of styles of national self-representation that may be observed through the examination of powerful areal cultural artifacts such as the Buddhist religion or the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Such an effort will of necessity be complicated by a number of factors. Clearly some cultures, for example, such as those of Southeast Asia have been far more receptive to the *Rāmāyaṇa* than the powerful cultures of East Asia and these complex variations need to be studied. Thus, it may be possible that a broad set of studies that include psychological as well as textual modes of inquiry conducted through the collaboration of scholars working on, the different cultural and linguistic areas of Asia could shed new light on such vexed problems as the relationship, if any between, for example the fascinating figures of the *Rāmāyaṇa*'s Hanuman and the Hsi-yu Chi's Sun Wuk'ung. Then too, on the practical side, language and area studies in the contemporary academy have by no means immune to the pressures of nationalistic cultural historiography and modern identity politics. There is thus often a tendency to view the cultures one studies or with which one is otherwise associated as the monolithic and self-referent, even as the source of all culture in the surrounding region and even the whole world. Certainly we have seen a good bit of this in the area of Indian Studies. Yet close and impartial inquiry has tended to show that all cultures are, as they say, always already subject to hybridity. It is the sorting out of the fascinating mechanisms through which cultures grow and develop and influence one another that presents us as, dare I use the term, Asianists with extraordinary opportunities to further our understanding of one of the world's richest and most diverse cultural regions. H. D. Smith

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VEDIC ORIGIN OF PURĀNIC GODDESS GAURĪ

By

S. K. LAL

[गौरीदेव्या आख्यानां पुराणेषु बहुशो वर्णितम् । तस्याः पूजायास्तत्संबद्ध-
व्रताप्नामुपासनायाश्च साङ्गोयाङ्गं विस्तृतं विवरणमुपलभ्यते पुराणेषु । वस्तुतः
शिवशक्तीनां विष्णुशक्तीनाञ्चोपासनाया बाहुल्यं वर्तते पुराणेषु । अस्मिन् निबन्धे सप्रमाणं
प्रतिपादितं यत्-गौर्याः उपासनाया मूलं वर्तते वेदमन्त्रसंहितासु ब्राह्मणग्रन्थेषु च । अस्मिन्
प्रसङ्गे बहूनां वेदप्रमाणानामुल्लेखो लेखकमहोदयेन कृतः । एतद्विषये यास्कसायणादीनां
मतानामपि विवेचनमत्र कृतम् । मूलतः गौर्यः, गौरः, गौरीशब्दा गोशब्दस्य वाचका
आसन् । कालान्तरे गौर्याः पार्वत्या वाचका अभूवन् । गौर्यः गौरी वा शिवेन तथैव संबद्धा
जाता यथा गावः कृष्णेन संबद्धा जाताः ।]

A perusal of a large number of *vratas* (fast-days) and *utsavas* (festival-days) in a year of Hindu calendar brings out a striking and significant fact that modern Hinduism¹ is predominantly female (goddess) oriented.² Out of 1211 *vratas* and *utsavas* in a year, there are 189 days when female divinities are worshipped in one form or the other.³

Śiva and Viṣṇu are the two most prominent divinities in Hindu religion and mythology. A study of female divinities, as they are worshipped in Hindu rites and rituals of common folk, reveals that the female divinities belong to two groups, namely, Śiva and Viṣṇu.

There are 112 *vrata*-days when a female divinity is worshipped, and there are seventeen female divinities worshipped on these days as shown below:

1. By modern Hinduism is meant post Brāhmaṇic Purānic Hinduism.
2. Out of 360 days in a Hindu calendar year, on as many as 38 days female divinities are exclusively worshipped.
This information is based on the *Kāla-nirṇaya*, year 2002, published by Sumangala press (Pvt.) Ltd., Dadar, Mumbai-400014.
3. This information is based on P.V. Kane, *History of Dharmasastra*, Vol. V, Pt. I, pp. 255ff.

| S. No. | Female Divinities | No. of vratas/utsavas |
|--------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. | Gaurī | 32 |
| 2. | Durgā | 26 |
| 3. | Umā | 20 |
| 4. | Pārvatī | 3 |
| 5. | Satī | 1 |
| 6. | Bhavānī | 4 |
| 7. | Lalitā | 6 |
| 8. | Candī/Caṇḍikā | 5 |
| 9. | Cāmuṇḍā | 1 |
| 10. | Vindhyavāsini | 1 |
| 11. | Mahiṣāsoramardini | 1 |
| 12. | Jyeṣṭhā | 1 |
| 13. | Kālī/Bhadrakālī/Mahākālī | 4 |
| 14. | Manasā | 1 |
| 15. | Śītalā | 3 |
| 16. | Saṣṭhī | 2 |
| 17. | Alakṣmī | 1 |
| Total | | 112 |

There are 28 *vrata* -days and only three female divinities belonging to the Viṣṇu-group are worshipped as mentioned below:

| S. No. | Female Divinities | No. of vratas/utsavas |
|--------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. | Lakṣmī | 26 |
| 2. | Śrī | 1 |
| 3. | Tulasī | 1 |
| Total | | 28 |

Amongst the divinities of the Śiva-group, Gaurī is the most popular (worshipped on 32 days as shown earlier).

This paper attempts to study the genesis and growth of goddess Gaurī. To begin with, it may be pointed out that Gaurī, as a female divinity, does not occur in the Vedic texts. It is only in the Epics and the purāṇas

that her character and function as a goddess within the Śiva-group flourished.

The etymology of the word *gaurī* is uncertain. Yāska (Nir. 11.39) derives the word *gaura* from the root *ruc* – 'to shine' Sāyaṇa (on *RV* 1.164.41) derives it from the root *gr* – 'to make sound'. Bohtling and Roth (*PW*) and Grassman (*GW*) derive the word *gaura* from the stem *go*. They explain the word *gaurī* as *gaura mṛgī*. In support, they quote *RV* 9.101.11 which reads:

सुष्वाणासो व्यद्रिभिश्चिताना गोरधि त्वचि ।

RV 9.101.11 ab

On this back-ground, we study the goddess Gaurī. A Study of the term *gaurī*, as found in the Vedic literature, shows that the word occurs both as masculine *gaura*, and as feminine *gaurī* (once also *gaurā*) in the Vedic literature. In the *Ṛgveda*, the masculine *gaura* has been mentioned as a particular kind of animal. We cite below a few Vedic verses:

1. इह त्वा गोपरीणसा महे मन्दन्तु राधसे ।

सरो गौरौ यथा पिब ॥

RV 8.45.24

This *Rk* refers to Indra. The *Ṛṣi*-poet says that let Soma drops with milky draughts (*gopariṇasā*) cheer Indra for his great munificence, and let Indra drink them (Soma drops) as a *gaura* drinks water from a lake. Note that in this *Rk* the words *go* (in *gopariṇasā*) and *gaura* occur together.

2. सेमं नः स्तोममा गह्युपेदं सवनं सुतम् ।

गौरौ न तृषितः पिब ॥

RV 1.16.5

This *Rk* also deals with Indra. The *Ṛṣi*-poet wishes that Indra come to the libation poured for him accompanied with the *stomas* and drink it as does a thirsty *gaura*.

3. गौराद् वेदीयाँ अवपानमिन्द्रो विश्वाहेद् याति

सुतसोममिच्छन् ॥

RV 7.98.1cd

This also refers to Indra. The Ṛṣi-poet says that a *gaura* knows no better a drinking place than Indra who knows and ever seeks a person who presses Soma for him (Indra).

4. यथा गौरो अपाकृतं तृष्यन्नेत्यवेरिणम् ।

RV 8.4.3 ab

Indra is prayed to to come to the morning and evening Soma pressings and drink Soma along with the Kanvas as a thirsty *gaura* goes to a desert's pool.

5. मध्वः सुतस्य स दिवि प्रियो नरा पातं गौराविवैरिणे ॥

RV 8.87.1 cd

In this Ṛk, the Aśvins are requested to drink sweet (Soma) juice as two *gauras* drink water in a desert's pool.

In all the above examples, drinking of Soma has been compared with drinking of water by a *gaura*. What kind of an animal a *gaura* was? The following Ṛks provide some clues:

1. तस्माद् भिया वरुण दूरमायं गौरो न क्षेप्नोरविजे ज्यायाः

RV 10.51.6 cd

In this Ṛk, Agni tells Varuna that he fled away from gods as a *gaura* flees afraid of the bow-string of a hunter.⁴ This indicates that the *gaura* was an animal to be hunted. Further, in RV 5.78.2, *gaura* has been used in the juxtaposition with *hariṇa*.

2. अश्विना हरिणाविव गौराविवानु यवसम् ।

हंसाविव पततमा सुताँ उप ॥

RV 5.78.2

The Aśvins are asked to come to drink the Soma juice like a pair of *hariṇa*, or a pair of *gaura*, or a pair of *hamsa*.

3. विदद् गौरस्य गवयस्य गोहे यदी वाजाय सुधुयो वहन्ति ॥

RV 4.21.8 cd

4. The legend referred to here is: The three elder brothers of Agni, viz., Bhūpati, Bhuvanapati, and Bhūtānāmpati were selected to carry *haviṣ* offerings. But all the three brothers perished doing so. When the youngest Agni, Saucika by name, was assigned the job, he fled away and hid himself in the water. The gods discovered him and requested him to resume his duties (TS 2.6.6). The present stanza is uttered by the youngest Agni, (cf. also KS 15.7; MS 3.8.6).

Here *gaura* has been used in the proximity of *gavaya*.

The above three examples show that *gaura* was an animal to be hunted and that it was like *gavaya* (*Bos gavaeus*) and *hariṇa* (gazelle) and that it was a wild animal. In the *Paśuśīrṣopadhāna* rite, while building the Āhavanīya fire-altar, TS 4.2.10.2 says:⁵ गौरमारण्यमनु ते दिशामि । Which shows that the *gaura* was a wild animal (*āraṇyam*).

In the following occurrences, the word *gaura* has been used in the feminine gender, once *ākārānta* and remaining *īkārānta*:

1. नरा गौरैव विद्युतं तृष्णाणाऽस्माकमद्य सवनोप यातम् ।

RV 7.69.6 ab

O Aśvins ! come to the libations like a *gaura* (female *gaurā*, Sāyaṇa -*gaurā mrgīva*) thirsty for the lightning. The word lightning here means clouds or waters and has been used metonymically.

2. स्वादोरित्था विषूवतो मध्वः पिबन्ति गौर्यः ।

RV 1.84.10 ab

Gauryaḥ drink sweet juice of Soma that has been diffused. Sāyaṇa explains *madhvaḥ pibanti gauryaḥ* as *gaura varṇā gāvaḥ somaṁ pibanti*. What does it mean? The reference here is to the act of mixing milk (here of *gauryaḥ*) with Soma juice. That metaphorically means as if *gauryaḥ* are drinking Soma.

3. गौरस्य यः पयसः पीतिमानश आ सर्वतातिमदितिं वृणीमहे ॥

RV 10.100.2

To him (Vāyu) who has approached the draughts of milk of *gaura* (i.e. female *gaurī*) we ask for freedom and complete felicity. (Tr. Griffith).

4. सोमो गौरी अधि श्रितः ।

RV 9.12.3 c ⁶

Soma rests on *gaurī*. What does it mean? Again, we have to refer to a rite (in the Soma pressing) where on the four *Uparavases* (sounding holes) and on the two wooden planks (*adhiṣavaṇaphalake*) a hide of *gaurī* is

5. Cf. also MS 2.7.17; KS 16.17; ŚB 7.5.2.33.

6. Cf. RV 9.101.11- *goradhi tvaci* .

spread, and on which is kept the *grāvans* (pressing stones) for crushing the Soma stalks.⁷

In the above examples, *gaurā* (fem. singular), *gaurī* (fem. sg.), and *gauryaḥ* (fem. plural) occur. As plural, Sāyaṇa explains *gauryaḥ* as *gaura varṇāḥ gāvaḥ*, and as singular *gaurī*, he explains *gaurī adhigauryam adhimādhyamikāyaṁ vāci*.

Although the word *gaurī* has some times been explained as *mādhyamikā vāk*⁸ (i.e. the speech in the mid-region, i.e., the thundering sound in the clouds), yet the context in which the term has been used in ṚV 9.12.3, does not warrant the meaning *mādhyamikā vāk*. 'Hide of *gaurī*' (the animal) is better and suits the context and purpose.

The above references patently indicate that during the time of the Ṛk-Saṁhitā, the milk of a female *gaura* was used to be mixed with Soma juice (ṚV 1.84.10), and the hide of a female *gaura* was spread on the two wooden planks (*adhiṣavaṇa-phalake*) on the *Uparavases* (RV 9.12.3). It is later, during the post Saṁhitā period of the Brāhmaṇas and the Śrauta-sūtras that the cow's milk and the cow's hide were used in the Soma pressing rites, when the Aryans had advanced further from the mountaneous regions of the north-west of the Indian sub-continent to the eastern regions of India. Further, it is very likely that the wild animal *gaura/gaurī*, in the course of time, was also tamed and domesticated for the purpose of milk. Such a change is noticed in the Ṛgveda itself. In ṚV 4.12.6 (RV 10.126.8) the word *gauryam* refers to a domestic animal:

यथा ह त्यद्वसवो गौर्यं चित्पदि षितामुञ्चता यजत्राः ।

एवोष्वस्मन्मुञ्चता व्यंहः प्र तार्यग्ने प्रतरं न आयुः ॥

RV 4.12.6

In this Ṛk, loosening the bondage of a man has been compared with untying the rope with which a *gaurī* has been tied.⁹

7. ĀpŚS 12.2.14; KātŚS 8.5.28.

8. One may refer here to the famous verse of the *Asyavāmiya-sūkta*:

गौरीर्मिमाय सलिलानि तक्षत्येकपद्मी द्विपद्मी सा चतुष्पदी ।

अष्टापदी नवपदी बभूवषी सहस्राक्षरा परमे व्योमन् ॥

RV 1.164.41

9. RV 10.126.8 mentions that the Vasus freed the *gaurī* (female *gaura*) from the Gandharva, Viśvāvasu.

A further development of the word *gaura/gaurī* is its adjectival use. TS 5.6.16 enumerates a number of animals collected in the Aśvamedha sacrifice who are dedicated to different divinities. TS 5.6.16.1 (KS 49.7) mentions:

ऐन्द्रावैष्णवा गौरत्नलामास्तूपराः

For Indra and Viṣṇu (dual divinities) (are offered) *tūparas* (hornless goats) of *gaura* and *lalāma* form. The word *lalāma* means 'frolicking, sportive', etc. What does the word *gaura* mean here? It definitely has to do some thing with the colour of the animal *gaura*. Sāyaṇa in one place (on ṚV 4.58.2) explains *gaurāḥ* as *aruṇa varṇāḥ*. The lexical meaning is 'whitish, yellowish'.¹⁰

By way of summarizing, what has been discussed above, it may be pointed out that *gaurī* is an animal found in the Vedic literature and its milk and hide were used in the Vedic sacrifices.

Coming to the purāṇic literature, it is well known that Gaurī is Pārvatī, that Pārvatī is a mountain deity, that she became Kālī (blackish) when Rātrī enveloped her, that being taunted by Śiva as Kālī (blacky), she performed severe penance and that by the grace of Brahmā, she cast off her black sheath, and thus became *gaurī* (fair complexioned like the animal *gaurī*).¹¹

It has been pointed out earlier that the milk and hide of female *gaura* were used in the Soma sacrifice. It is very likely that the female animal, *gaurī*, was worshipped by the local populace in the mountains at that point of time, most probably by the followers of Śiva on the same pattern as *go* (cow) was worshipped by the followers of Viṣṇu in the plains.

Further, a bull (later known as Nandī) was already associated with Śiva. It may have been thought natural that the animal *gaurī* was also

10. TS 7.3.18.1 and KS 43.8 make some difference between *śveta* and *gaura* colours because both the words are used together in one place. The relevant mantra (employed in the *aśvāvayavavirūpa homa* in the Aśvamendha sacrifice) reads:
कृष्णाय स्वाहा श्वेताय स्वाहा गौराय स्वाहा

Cf. also ṚV 4.58.2 cd which reads :

उप ब्रह्मा शृणवत् शस्यमानं चतुःशृङ्गोऽवमीद् गौरः ।

In this mantra, *gaura* is said to possess four horns, although Sāyaṇa explains *catuḥśṛṅgaḥ* as denoting the four Vedas.

11. S.K. Lal, *Female Divinities in Hindu Mythology & Ritual*, Pune, 1980, pp. 145ff.

brought under the fold of Śiva. In his iconographical depictions, Śiva is often shown holding a gazelle like animal in his hand.¹² It could very well be the female *gaura*, i.e. *gaurī*.

During the time of a kind of religious amalgamation of many female divinities under Śiva-group, (as a number of Śakti-pīthas¹³ spread all over India reveal, Gauri belongs to the Kānyakubja Śakti-pītha), Gaurī was associated with Śiva on a par with Pārvatī.¹⁴ Her animal identity was completely forgotten with the passage of time, and today it is almost beyond recognition except the name.

The bovine *gaurī* was later transformed into the goddess Gaurī and was associated with Śiva on the same pattern as cow was associated with Kṛṣṇa. Mountaneous nature of Gaurī and Gaurī as goddess Pārvatī merged into one in the Purāṇas.

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12. a.T. A. Gopinath Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, 2nd edn. Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi, 1968, Plate LXXX (facing page 290), Vol. II, Pt. I.
 b. R.S. Gupte, *Iconography of the Hindus, Buddhists and Jains*, D. B. Taraporevala & Co., Bombay, 1972, Pl. XIII.
 c. E.F.J. Payne, (*The Saktas*, p. 7, as quoted by Margaret and James Stutley, *A Dictionary of Hinduism*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1977, s.v. Gauri) also suggests that goddess Gauri might have been named after Gaura (the animal) and that she was regarded as a goddess of harvest and ripened corn.
13. For the names and locations of the Śakti-pīthas, see Vettam Mani, *Purānic Encyclopedia*, rep. 1984, Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi, 1984, s.v. *Sakti-pīthas*.
14. In the Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā 2.9.1, a clear cut identity of Gaurī as a divinity connected with Mahādeva (Śiva) is found:
 तत् पुरुषाय विद्महे महादेवाय धीमहि ।
 तन्नो रुद्रः प्रचोदयात् ॥
 तद् गाङ्गौच्याय विद्महे गिरिसुताय धीमहि ।
 तन्नो गौरीं प्रचोदयात् ॥

KARMA (ACTION), RETRIBUTION AND FREEDOM OF WILL IN THE DEVĪBHĀGAVATA PURĀṆA (DB)

By

G. K. PAI

[भारतीयवाङ्मये कर्मफलस्य पुनर्जन्मनश्च सिद्धान्तः बद्धमूलो वर्तते । प्राणिभिः स्वकर्मफलमवश्यमेव भोक्तव्यमिति शास्त्रीयः पक्षः- 'नाभुक्तं क्षीयते कर्म'-सर्वत्र वर्णितमस्ति । किन्तु कर्मफलस्यावश्यंभाविताप्रतिपादनानन्तरमपि पुरुषार्थस्योद्यमस्य वा-वश्यकता प्रतिपादिता वर्तते । पूर्वकर्मफलानां संज्ञा दैवमपि वर्तते । अस्मिन् निबन्धे विदुषा लेखकेन श्रीमद्देवीभागवतपुराणमाधारीकृत्य कर्मफलानां प्रतिपादनं विहितम् । निबन्धेऽस्मिन् दैवस्य प्राबल्यं निरूप्य उद्यमस्यापि आवश्यकता अस्य पुराणस्याधारेण प्रतिपादिता ।]

From the profuse references that regularly occur in different contexts in the legends in the DB, it appears that the DB was composed at a time when the theory of Karma and Punarjanma (Rebirth) had taken deep roots in the minds of people. Long disquisitions on Karmavipāka (retribution of one's actions) are also found in the text which points out to a long period of development of the concepts of Karma, retribution, rebirth and transmigration. The doctrine of Karma and Punarjanma is one of the most fundamental doctrines of the Indian system of Religion and Philosophy including that of Buddhism and Jainism.

Karma, Heaven and Hell in the Vedic Age

The word Karma occurs in the Ṛgveda (RV) many times to mean an act physical, oral or mental performed by a human being without which no man can exist. Heaven was believed to be the place for enjoying the rewards of good deeds. Thus in RV X. 16.4, Agni is prayed to take the deceased to the world of those who performed good deeds. cf. ताभिर्वहेनं सुकृतामु लोकम् ॥ In RV IX. 113.7-10, the sacrificer who offers Soma to Indra desires that he may be placed in that world (heaven) as an immortal, where there are constant light, joys and delights and also

fulfilment of all desires. The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (XII. 9.1.1) gives details regarding rewards for good deeds and retribution for evil deeds. It (XI. 6.1.3-6) also indicates that one who does evil in one's life suffers for it in his later life from that being whom he treated badly. The Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (IV. 4.5 and III.2.13) states that a man becomes good (i.e reborn as a good human being) by good actions and becomes evil by evil actions. The Chāndogya Upaniṣad (V. 10.7-8) remarks that those whose conduct has been good will attain good birth as that of a Brāhmaṇa, a Kṣatriya or a Vaiśya. Those whose conduct has been evil will attain evil birth such as that of a dog, a hog or a caṇḍāla. Those who do not go by the above two paths are born as low creatures such as worms, flies, etc.

In RV I.125.5 the worshipper is said to occupy heaven and to mix with gods: cf. नाकस्य पृष्ठे अधितिष्ठति श्रितो यः प्रणाति स ह देवेषु गच्छति ॥

Elsewhere he implores Mitra and Varuṇa for immortality cf. RV. V. 63.2 : वृष्टिं वा राधो अमृतत्वमीहे ॥ The Atharvaveda (IV. 34.2, 5-6) describes heaven as a place full of beves of women, ponds of ghee, streams of milk, honey, wine and lotus lakes. The Taittirīya Saṁhitā also makes frequent references to heaven. These passages make it clear that the pious after death and heroes killed in battle rejoice in heaven which is full of material comforts in abundance. The Kaṭha Upaniṣad (I. 12) describes heaven as a place of delight and devoid of fear, old age, hunger, thirst and sorrow.

In RV IX. 73.8, Soma is said to punish those who do not observe his ordinances by throwing them down. Indra and Soma are beseeched to strike down evil-doers into bottomless darkness (RV. VII. 104.3). Thus the sages of RV seem to have some faint idea of a dark pit to which sinners are relegated to by the gods. The Atharvaveda gives clear references to hell. It (XII.4.36) mentions narakaloka cf.

अथाहुरनारकं लोकं निरुन्धानस्य याचिताम् ॥

The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (XI. 6.1.4) mentions the torments of Hell viz cutting off the limbs for crimes committed. The Kaṭha Upaniṣad (V. 7) states that after death, some enter the womb for embodied existence while others become fixed matter (sthāṇu) like tree, etc.

Karma, Heaven and Hell in Post-Vedic Literature :

The Nirukta derives the word 'naraka' in two different ways: (i) ni + araka i.e. as meaning 'going below' (the earth) न्यरकम्-नीचैरस्मिन्नयते गम्यत

इति नरकम् and (ii) na + ra + ka नास्त्यस्मिन् रमणं रतिकरं स्थानमल्पमप्यस्तीति नरकम् i.e. where there is not the slightest place for joy. It (Nirukta II. 11) also derives the word 'putra' (son) as one who saves (the father) from the hell called 'put'. Manu (IX. 138) also offers the same derivation for 'putra'.

Manu (XII. 54-81), Yājñavalkya (III. 131, 135-136, 206-217) and Viṣṇusmṛti (ch. 44) provide that those guilty of grave sins after having passed a number of years in hells, are born again in this world because of their evil actions, as lower animal, insects, trees, shrubs, etc. cf. Manu XII. 54 and Yājñavalkya III. 206.

Manu (XI. 48, 53) emphasizes that those who do wicked deeds should undergo penance in order to expiate their sins, for otherwise, they are born again endowed with disgraceful marks or suffer malformations. Viṣṇusmṛti ch. 45 also speaks of sinners who are born with diseases and disgraceful marks after passing a number of years in hells. The Vedāntasūtra (III. 1. 16) mentions seven narakas. Manu (IV. 88-90), Yājñavalkya (III.222-224) and Viṣṇusmṛti (43.2-22) enumerate twenty-one narakas. Other texts which deal with the hells and the torments thereof are Mahābhārata Anuśāsanaparva (24.60-80), Svargārohaṇakaparva (2.16-26), etc.

The Āraṇyakaparva (51.15-16) states that those who die in battle attain svarga. It (184.6-7) also describes heaven with its extensive lakes full of lotus flowers and on whose banks dwell the meritorious honoured by Apsarās of brilliant golden complexion, who wear ornaments and apply fragrant cosmetics to their bodies. Āraṇyakaparva (247.2-34) speaks of heaven as the place where one enjoys the rewards of one's good actions and whence one falls down when the accumulated merit is exhausted. The Anuśāsanaparva (24.83-100) lists the actions which lead a man to heaven.

The Mokṣadharmā (174.16) also states that the deeds done in a previous existence follow the doer just as the calf identifies its mother among thousands of cows. cf.

यथा धेनुसहस्रेषु वत्सो विन्दति मातरम् ।

तथा पूर्वकृतं कर्म कर्तारमनुगच्छति ॥

The Rāmāyaṇa affirms that one reaps the fruit of one's actions whether good or evil. cf. Rāmāyaṇa II. 57.4.

यदाचरति कल्याणि शुभं वा यदि वाऽशुभम् ।
तदेव लभते भद्रे कर्ता कर्मजमात्मनः ॥

When Rāma leaves for exile, Kausalyā, the mother of Rāma laments that she must have indeed, in past life, harmed or killed living beings as a result of which sorrow has befallen her. She also believes that in a former life she must have cut off the udders (breasts) of cows (mothers) when their calves (children) desired to drink milk of their mothers. cf. Rāmāyaṇa II. 34.4; 38.16.

Punarjanma (Rebirth or transmigration)

A clear statement about the doctrine of Punarjanma is not available in the RV. The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (X. 6.3.1) arrived at the conclusion that it was man's will (desire) and corresponding deed that fashions the world he will reach after death. The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (IV. 4.5) states 'a man will be (born) as he works or behaves. If his deeds are good, he will be born good, if his deeds are evil, he will be born evil; a man consists of desires; as his desire is, so will be his determination and will; as he wills, so will be his deed; according to his deeds, he will become'. The same Upaniṣad (III. 2. 13) again reiterates that a man is born good by good actions and is born evil by evil actions. These two passages taken together mean that the actions or deeds of a person in this life shapes his future life and the present birth of a person depends upon his conduct in his past life or lives. Thus desire or volition is the root cause of the cycle of births and deaths that is called saṃsāra. The similar view held by Chāndogya Upaniṣad (V. 10.7-8) is already quoted above. Thus every act, good or bad, produces a result which cannot be escaped. An evil deed cannot be expiated by works of merit but its punishment must be suffered. Man's conduct in his past existence fashions the nature of his present existence and his actions in the present existence taken along with the residue of past action determines his future existence. This is the theory of punarjanma and transmigration. This law of Karma and transmigration according to which the present existence is determined by the action or conduct of one's previous existence led to confusion in the minds of people with Fatalism. Already in the period of Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad, doubts were raised against the inexorability of Karma by pointing out of Kāla, Svabhāva, etc as the powerful cause of creation to the detriment of the supreme role of Freedom of Will. cf. Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad I. 1-2 :

कालः स्वभावो नियन्त्रियद्दृच्छा भूतानि योनिः पुरुष इति चिन्त्यम् ॥

i.e Time or inherent nature, fate or chance, elements or birth or the will of a person is to be considered as the cause of creation.

Karmavipāka

Although the term Karma means action, good as well as bad, the term used in the section on penances presents to the mind the idea of only evil deeds. Hence Karmavipāka means retribution or ripening or fruition of wrong deeds or sins or evil actions. According to the Yogasutra (II. 13), the retribution can be in three ways: सति मूले तद्विपाको जात्यायुर्भोगाः i.e birth as a worm, animal, etc., living for a brief period and undergoing the torments of hell. The term Karmavipāka seems to have been known to Yājñavalkya (cf. III. 133). The gist of Karmavipāka is that no soul need be without hope provided he is prepared to suffer the torments of hell and that in the end he will be able to discover the true greatness and realize peace and perfection. (History of Dharmaśāstra by P.V. Kane, Vol. IV. p. 177).

Karma and retribution in Purāṇas

Just like the Mahābhārata and the Smṛtis, the major Purāṇas also emphasize the importance of good and evil actions and lay down that one has to reap the fruits of one's actions, whether good or evil, for, Karma does not come to an end even after hundreds of lives. cf. N. II. 29. 18:

अवश्यमेव भोक्तव्यं कृतं कर्म शुभाऽशुभम् ।

नाऽभुक्तं क्षीयते कर्म ह्यपि जन्मशतैः प्रिय ॥

The Padmapurāṇa (P.) states that Karma cannot be destroyed except by reaping the fruit thereof; no one can set aside the bondage due to Karma of past lives (cf. P. II. 81.47-48 & 94.7-8). The P. further states that no man in this world is able to annul the effect of actions done in previous lives by his power or birth of progeny (cf. P. II 94.15). The P. (II-94.7-8) continues: The farmer surely reaps the crop of whatever seed he sows in the field. Reaping the fruit of action alone destroys the Karma, cf.

क्षेत्रेषु यादृशं बीजं वपते कृषिकारकः ।

तादृशं भुञ्जते तात फलमेव न संशयः ॥

यादृशं क्रियते कर्म तादृशं परिभुज्यते ।

विनाशहेतुः कर्मास्य सर्वे कर्मवशा वयम् ॥

The Viṣṇupurāṇa (Vi) (II. 6.46) and Brahmapurāṇa. (B) (23.3-6) hold that svarga is what causes happiness in the mind and naraka is the opposite of it. It is only a change in attitude of mind with pleasure and pain as its signs. The Purāṇas also contain glowing descriptions of heaven. The B. (25.67-78) lists the actions which lead one to heaven. The Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa (Mār) (10.93-95), and P. (II. 95.1-9) describe heaven as a place of all pleasures and absence of sorrow, with its aerial cars, apsaras, golden bees, seats and so on.

The Vi (I. 6.41) names the seven hells. Elsewhere (II. 6.2-5) it names twentysix narakas. Garuḍapurāṇa (II. 3.47-53) and Agnipurāṇa (371.19-22) enumerate twentyone narakas. Several Purāṇa texts describe in great detail the gruesome torments of hell (cf. Vi. II. 6.2-5 Mār. chs. 10 & 12; Bhāgavatapurāṇa V. 26.7; Nāradiyapurāṇa I. 15.1-20; P. Uttara ch. 227 and Pātāla ch. 48; Bhaviṣyapurāṇa, Brahmapurva 192.11-27 and chs. 5-6; Skandapurāṇa I. ch. 39 and VI. 226-227). The concept of Karmavipāka also frequently occurs in the Purāṇas (Matsyapurāṇa 115.14 etc.). They also state into what animals, trees and creepers, sinners are born after undergoing torments of hell (Garuḍapurāṇa Preta Khaṇḍa 2.57-90; Agnipurāṇa. 371.30-32, etc.). The Vāmanapurāṇa 12.1-43, Mār. ch. 15 and Varāhapurāṇa 203.21-24 treat of Karmavipāka. The Varāhapurāṇa (203.21-24) deals elaborately with Karmavipāka or the torments of hell but also holds out hope to the sinner that after suffering the torments in hell for a number of years, he is born again as a human being.

Karma and retribution in the DB

DB holds action which conforms to the conduct laid down by Veda to be auspicious and that action which is opposed to Veda is termed inauspicious cf. DB..IX.28.5:

वेदप्रणिहितो धर्मः कर्म सन्मङ्गलं परम् ।

अवैदिकं तु यत् कर्म तदेवाऽशुभमेव च ॥

No one can escape fruit of one's good or evil actions. This is the refrain which we repeatedly come across in DB. The fruit is in accordance with the action. cf.

यादृशं कुरुते कर्म तादृशं फलमाप्नुयात् ।

अवश्यमेव भोक्तव्यं कृतं कर्म शुभाऽशुभम् ॥ DB. VI. 9-67

नाऽभुक्तं क्षीयते कर्म कल्पकोटिशतैरपि ।

अवश्यमेव भोक्तव्यं कृतं कर्म शुभाऽशुभम् ॥ DB. IX. 29.69b-70 a

अवश्यमेव भोक्तव्यं कृतं कर्म शुभाऽशुभम् ।

बलिष्ठैर्दुर्बलैर्वाऽपि स्वल्पं वा बहु वा कृतम् ॥ DB. VI. 7.18b-19a

cf. also III. 25.6; IV. 21. 7; IV.10.10;VI.10.15-16; IV. 2.34; X. 40.73-74. Seeing Viṣṇu's head severed by the end of the bow (which suddenly shot up as the bow-string was nibbled at by the ant), Brahmā expresses the same views and also adds that neither he himself whose head was clipped by Śiva impelled by Fate, nor Śiva whose liṅga fell off by the power of curse, nor again Indra himself who after having been dislodged from heaven hid himself in the stalk of a lotus in the Mānasa lake, could transcend destiny. cf. DB. I. 5. 43-47:

अवश्यमेव भोक्तव्यं कालेनापादितं च यत् ।

शुभं वाऽप्यशुभं वाऽपि दैवं कोऽतिक्रमेत् पुनः ॥

देहवान्सुखदुःखानां भोक्ता नैवाऽत्र संशयः ।

यथा कालवशात्कृतं शिरो मे शंभुना पुरा ॥

तथैव लिङ्गपातञ्च महादेवस्य शापतः ।

तथैवाऽद्य हरेर्मूर्धा पतितो लवणाम्भसि ॥

सहस्रभगसप्रासिर्दुःखं चैव शचीपतेः ।

स्वर्गाद् भ्रंशस्तथा वासः कमले मानसे सरे ॥

एते दुःखस्य भोक्तारः केन दुःखं न भुज्यते ।

संसारेऽस्मिन् महाभागास्तस्माच्छोकं त्यजन्तु वै ॥

Vasudeva when facing the dilemma of offering his first-born to be slain by Kāṁsa consoles Devakī by the same words cf. DB. IV.21.5-7:

इमं पुत्रं सुकेशान्ते दास्यामि भ्रातृसूनवे ।

खले कंसे विनाशार्थं दैवे किं वा करिष्यसि ॥

विचित्रकर्मणां पाको दुर्ज्ञेयो ह्यकृतात्मभिः ।

सर्वेषां किल जीवानां कालपाशानुवर्तिनाम् ॥

भोक्तव्यं स्वकृतं कर्म शुभं वा यदि वाऽशुभम् ।

प्रारब्धं सर्वथैवाऽत्र जीवस्य विधिनिर्मितम् ॥

One has to experience, without fail, the fruit of one's Karma, auspicious or inauspicious. Hence one should not worry about the resulting pleasure or pain. In adversity, one may experience more of pain, whereas in auspicious times, one may experience more happiness. One must not surrender to weal or woe. All this is governed by Fate and is never under one's control. Hence the wise must be indefatigable in woe. Just as a wooden puppet (controlled by the conductor) plays various roles, similarly, the embodied (soul) conducts being governed by his own action cf. DB. III. 25.6-9:

अवश्यमेव भोक्तव्यं कृतं कर्म शुभाऽशुभम् ।
 तस्मान्न शोचितव्यं ते सुखे दुःखे कदाचन ॥
 दुःखे दुःखाधिकान् पश्येत्सुखे पश्येत्सुखाधिकम् ।
 आत्मानं शोकहर्षाभ्यां शत्रुभ्यामिव नार्पयेत् ॥
 दैवाधीनमिदं सर्वं नात्माधीनं कदाचन ।
 न शोकेन तदाऽऽत्मानं शोषयेन्मतिमान् नरः ॥
 यथा दारुमयी योषा नटादीनां प्रचेष्टते ।
 यथा स्वकर्मवशगो देही सर्वत्र वर्तते ॥

The DB also names the three types of Karma and how they affect the Jīva. In Vyāsa's advice to King Janamejaya, the three types of Karma are mentioned as Sañcita, Vartamāna and Prārabdha. Sañcita (accumulated) is the totality of actions done by one in one's past existences. Sañcita is again divided into Sāttvika, Rājasa and Tāmāsa. One must, without fail, experience the fruit of one's accumulated good or evil actions. It does not get destroyed even in hundreds of crores of Kalpas in the case of even gods. The good or evil action being done in the present existence is called Vartamāna. At the time of the soul's taking a body, Kāla seems to urge some of the already accumulated actions which are called Prārabdha. The Prārabdha Karma is destroyed only by experiencing it by the beings (cf. DB. IV. 10.8-14).

Vasudeva also names the three types of Karma viz Sañcita, Vartamāna and Prārabdha and explains to Devakī that it is one's own Karma that leads one to heaven or hell where one experiences the fruition of one's Karma. At the time of rebirth, Kāla unites some of the accumulated actions with the soul which regains a body in accordance

with its past actions. This embodied being experiences the Prārabdha Karma, good or evil, which does not get destroyed otherwise. The actions which are called Vartamāna (which are being done during the present existence) alone can be purged by means of prāyaścitta (atonement) (cf. DB.IV.21.19b-28).

King Sudarśana also names the three types of Karma which not only binds but also seals the fate of all the beings of the universe cf. DB.III.20.35.b-37).

That the Prārabdhakarma does not get destroyed except by the being's experiencing the fruition thereof is often repeated cf. DB.V.4.47:

प्रारब्धकर्मणां नाशो नाऽभोगाल्लक्ष्यते किल ॥

cf. also DB. IX.29.68-70:

क्षत्रियोऽथ वैश्यो वा कल्पकोटिशतेन च ॥

तपसा ब्राह्मणत्वञ्च न प्राप्नोति श्रुतौ श्रुतम् ।

नाऽभुक्तं क्षीयते कर्म कल्पकोटिशतैरपि ॥

अवश्यमेव भोक्तव्यं कृतं कर्म शुभाऽशुभम् ।

दैवतीर्थसहायेन कायव्यूहेन शुद्ध्यति ॥

Hence Triśaṅku decides to annihilate his Karma by residing in the holy āśramas of the forest, resort to tīrthas, concentrating his thoughts on Ambikā and by rendering devoted service to the Sants with whom he might, by luck, strike contact. (cf. DB. VII. 12.45-48). Thus it is the Prārabdhakarma urged by Kāla that lends a body to the being. At the very time the being takes the body, his happiness or sorrow as well as his death and the type of death that he will have – all this is determined; it does not happen otherwise cf. DB.V.10.38-39:

यदाऽयं देहसंबन्धो जीवस्य कालयोगतः ।

तदैव लिखितं सर्वं सुखं दुःखं तथा मृतिः ॥

यस्य येन प्रकारेण मरणं दैवनिर्मितम् ।

तस्य तेनैव जायेत नाऽन्यथेति विनिश्चयः ॥

It is Karma alone which is the cause of (rebirth and) the body because of which the being experiences the fruition of good and evil Karma done in the past existences by the beings – gods, men, asuras, yakṣas, gandharvas or kinnaras. Once the karma is destroyed, there is cessation of

birth to the being. Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Indra and other gods, dānavas, yakṣas and gandharvas – all-are governed by Karma. Otherwise how could there be a union with a body which is the cause of experiencing joy or sorrow to the embodied one ? Consequently, when the time is ripe, the karma accumulated in the earlier existences gathers speed and as fate would have it, man or god performs meritorious or sinful deeds and takes birth in accordance with it just as Nārāyaṇa and Nara took rebirth as Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna respectively (DB. VI. 10.15-22 a).

It is the body of the beings that is subject to joy and sorrow. The embodied one desires which consequently leads to pleasure or pain. He is always governed by destiny and thus, inevitably, is subjected to birth, death, joy and sorrow. cf. DB. VI. 10.28-29.

Yama delivers a long discourse to Sāvitrī on the result or effect of Karma: A being is born on account of his Karma and is also destroyed by it. It is Karma that causes his pleasure, pain, fear, sorrow, etc. By his conduct, he might become Indra, son of Brahmā, a devotee of Hari and free from birth and death. By his conduct, he might accomplish all Siddhis, gain immortality and achieve the four-fold goals viz Salokatā (same world), Sarūpatā (same form), Sāyujya (identification) and Sāmīpya (closeness) with Viṣṇu; he might even become a god, Manu, King of Kings, Śiva, Gaṇeśa, eminent among sages, a Kṣatriya, Vaiśya or Mleccha, movable or an (immovable) mountain, a demon, kinnara, an overlord, a tree, an animal or a wild beast, a lower animal, a worm, a daitya, a dānava or an asura cf. DB. IX. 27.17-25:

कर्मणा जायते जन्तुः कर्मणैव प्रलीयते ।
 शुखं दुःखं भयं शोकः कर्मणैव प्रणीयते ॥
 कर्मणेन्द्रो भवेज्जीवो ब्रह्मपुत्रः स्वकर्मणा ।
 स्वकर्मणा हरेर्दासो जन्मादिरहितो भवेत् ॥
 स्वकर्मणा सर्वसिद्धिममरत्वं लभेद् ध्रुवम् ।
 लभेत् स्वकर्मणा विष्णोः सालोक्यादिचतुष्टयम् ।
 सुरत्वञ्च मनुत्वञ्च राजेन्द्रत्वं लभेन्नरः ।
 कर्मणा च शिवत्वञ्च गणेशत्वं तथैव च ॥
 कर्मणा च मुनीन्द्रत्वं तपस्वित्वं स्वकर्मणा ।
 स्वकर्मणा क्षत्रियत्वं वैश्यत्वं च स्वकर्मणा ॥

कर्मणैव च म्लेच्छत्वं लभते नाऽत्र संशयः ।
 स्वकर्मणा जङ्गमत्वं शैलत्वञ्च स्वकर्मणा ॥
 कर्मणा राक्षसत्वञ्च किन्नरत्वं स्वकर्मणा ।
 कर्मणैवाधिपत्यं च वृक्षत्वञ्च स्वकर्मणा ॥
 कर्मणैव पशुत्वं च वनजीवी स्वकर्मणा ।
 कर्मणा क्षुद्रजन्तुत्वं कृमिवत्त्वञ्च स्वकर्मणा ॥
 दैतेयत्वं दानवत्वमसुरत्वं स्वकर्मणा ।

Inscrutable is the working of Karma in the embodiment of beings which is beyond the grasp of gods, much less of the humans cf. DB. VI. 10.34:

प्राणिनां देहसम्बन्धे गहना कर्मणो गतिः ।
 दुर्ज्ञेया सर्वथा देवैर्मानवानां तु का कथा ॥

The suffering undergone by Kṛṣṇa, such as his birth in prison, his escape from there to the care of Nandagopa in Gokula, his return to Mathurā and overpowering Kaiṁsa, his flight to Dvāravatī from fear of the Mleccha kings, the destruction of the Yādava clan on account of the curse of Brāhmaṇa and his own end by the arrow of a hunter – all these are the inscrutable ways of Karma which are beyond the comprehension of even gods cf. DB. IV. 2.2b-3a:

राजन् किमेतद् वक्तव्यं कर्मणां गहना गतिः ।
 दुर्ज्ञेया किल देवानां मानवानाञ्च का कथा ॥

No beings take birth except in accordance with their Karma. cf. DB. IV. 2.12a:

उत्पत्तिः सर्वजन्तूनां विना कर्म न विद्यते ॥

Undoubtedly, the origin of all beings is only because of their Karma. The beings which are without a beginning or end take their origin from the seed of their Karma; they take birth in different yonis and die again and again; but they never attain a body except on account of Karma, good and evil cf. DB. IV. 2.4-6a:

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|---|----|
| कर्मणैव समुत्पत्तिः सर्वेषां नाऽत्र संशयः । | |
| अनादिनिधना जीवाः कर्मबीजसमुद्भवाः ॥ | 4 |
| नानायोनिषु जायन्ते म्रियन्ते च पुनः पुनः । | |
| कर्मणा रहितो देहसंयोगो न कदाचन ॥ | 5 |
| शुभाऽशुभैस्तथा मिश्रैः कर्मभिर्वेष्टितं त्विदम् । | 6a |

All beings beginning from Brahmā are subject to the three types of Karma that exist in the body viz Sañcita, Prārabdha and Vartamāna. Pleasure and pain, old age, death, joy, sorrow, affection, anger and greed, all these attributes present in the body occur to everyone and are governed by fate. Emotions such as rāga (affection) and dveṣa (enmity) exist also in heaven. These changes which exist with the body on account of old enmity or affection are found in gods, humans and birds and animals cf. DB. IV.2.8b-11:

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|---|--|
| सुखदुःखजरामृत्युहर्षशोकादयस्तथा ॥ | |
| कामक्रोधौ च लोभश्च सर्वे देहगता गुणाः । | |
| दैवाधीनाश्च सर्वेषां प्रभवन्ति नराधिप ॥ | |
| रागद्वेषादयो भावा स्वर्गेऽपि प्रभवन्ति हि । | |
| देवानां मानवानाञ्च तिरञ्चाञ्च तथा पुनः ॥ | |
| विकारा सर्वे एवैते देहेन सह संगताः ॥ | |
| पूर्ववैरानुयोगेन स्नेहयोगेन वै पुनः ॥ | |

Even gods are not exempt from the retribution of their action. It is only on account of their respective conduct that the sun is always revolving, the moon is suffering from consumption and Rudra bears the skull in his hand. cf. DB.IV.2.12b-13a:

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| कर्मणा भ्रमते सूर्यः शशाङ्कः क्षयरोगवान् ॥ |
| कपाली च तथा रुद्रः कर्मणैव न संशयः ॥ |

During the incarnation of (Viṣṇu as) Rāma, the gods took birth as monkeys. Similarly, they again took birth as Yādavas to assist Kṛṣṇa (another incarnation of Viṣṇu). Thus prodded by Brahmā, Viṣṇu undertakes multitudes of incarnations for the protection of righteousness in every yuga. Viṣṇu goes on incarnating himself in different yonis (such

as Matsya, Kūrma, Varāha, etc.) in succession (as the wheel of time turns) like the revolving wheel of a chariot. For, Viṣṇu by his partial incarnations has to personally carry on destruction of the demons of earth cf. Db. IV 2.36--39:

रामावतारयोगेन देवा वानरतां गताः ।
 तथा कृष्णसहायार्थं देवा योदवतां गताः ॥
 एवं युगे युगे विष्णुरवताराननेकशः ।
 करोति धर्मरक्षार्थं ब्रह्मणा प्रेरितो भृशम् ।
 पुनः पुनर्हरिरेवं नानायोनिषु पार्थिव ।
 अवताराः भवन्त्यन्ये रथचक्रवद्भुताः ।
 दैत्यानां हननं कर्म कर्तव्यं हरिणा स्वयम् ।
 अंशांशेन पृथिव्यां वै कृत्वा जन्म महात्मना ॥

Gods are not foolish to undergo rebirth and continue constant strife with the demons which is wearisome and devoid of all happiness. It is only on account of the result of their Karma that the gods led by Brahmā take rebirth and experience pleasure and pain. For, one must necessarily experience the result of one's own good and evil actions whether one is a human being, god, bird or animal. A human being may, by the performance of austerities, gifts and sacrifices gain the position of Indra, but even Indra is dislodged once his accumulated merit is consumed cf. DB.IV.2.32-35:

किं सुखं विबुधाः दृष्ट्वा जन्म वाञ्छन्ति चेच्छया ।
 संग्रामममरैः सार्धं सुखं त्यक्त्वा निरन्तरम् ॥
 कर्तुमिच्छेच्च को मूढः श्रमदं सुखनाशनम् ।
 सर्वथैव नृपश्रेष्ठ ! सर्वे ब्रह्मादयः सुराः ॥
 कृतकर्मविपाकेन प्राप्नुवन्ति सुखासुखे ।
 अवश्यमेव भोक्तव्यं कृतं कर्म शुभाऽशुभम् ।
 देहवद्भिः नृभिर्देवैस्तिर्यग्भिश्च नृपोत्तम ॥
 तपसा दानयज्ञैश्च मानवश्चेन्द्रतां ब्रजेत् ।
 क्षीणे पुण्येऽथ शक्रोऽपि पतत्येव न संशयः ॥

That is why Bhartṛhari upholds the supremacy of Karma over all gods cf. Nitiśataka :

ब्रह्मा येन कुलालवन्नियमितो ब्रह्माण्डभाण्डोदरे
 विष्णुर्येन दशावतारगहने क्षितो महासंकटे ।
 रुद्रो येन कपालपाणिपुटके भिक्षाटनं कारितः
 सूर्यो भ्राम्यति नित्यमेव गगने तस्मै नमः कर्मणे ॥

i.e. he by whom Brahmā was reduced to a mere potter in the cavity of the Cosmic Egg (on duty of creation), Viṣṇu was condemned to harrowing hardship in the thick of his ten incarnations, Rudra was constrained to beg for alms with a skull in hand and the sun is being revolved in the sky everyday—to that Karma I offer my salutations.

The DB gives a description of the various narakas in which the sinners are punished and also on the torments of hell for the innumerable evil deeds (DB.IX. chs. 32-35 and 37). The legend of Satyavat and Sāvitrī (DB.IX.ch.29) also contains an account of the retribution of Karma as revealed by Yama to Sāviti.

According to Yama, the fruition of one's good or evil action takes effect only in the meritorious land of Bhārata, wherein the gods, daityas, danavas, gandharvas, rākṣasas and human beings are engaged in action. Depending upon their conduct in their former lives being auspicious or inauspicious, they go either to heaven or hell. Evil conduct generally leads one to be born as a diseased person or one with a brief and painful life-span. Good conduct leads to one to be born as a healthy person with deficient limbs whereas one with mean and despicable conduct is born with deficient limbs and one with meritorious conduct succeeds in the accomplishment of Siddhis. cf. DB.IX.29.14-18, 20-21:

शुभानामशुभानाञ्च कर्मणां जन्म भारते ।
 पुण्यक्षेत्रे च नान्यत्र सर्वञ्च भुञ्जते जनाः ॥ 14
 सुरा दैत्या दानवाश्च गन्धर्वा राक्षसादयः ।
 नराश्च कर्मजनका स सर्वे जीविनः सति ॥ 15
 विशिष्टजीविनः कर्म भुञ्जते सर्वयोनिषु ।
 शुभाऽशुभञ्च सर्वत्र स्वर्गेषु नरकेषु च ॥ 16
 विशेषतो जीविनश्च भ्रमन्ते सर्वयोनिषु ।

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| शुभाशुभं भुज्यते च कर्म पूर्वार्जितं परम् ॥ | 17 |
| शुभेन कर्मणा याति स्वर्लोकादिकमेव च । | |
| कर्मणा चाऽशुभेनैव भ्रमन्ति नरकेषु च ॥ | 18 |
| रोगी कुकर्मणा जीवश्चारोगी शुभकर्मणा । | |
| दीर्घजीवी च क्षीणायुः सुखी दुःखी चकर्मणा ॥ | 19 |
| अन्त्यादयश्चाङ्गहीनाः कर्मणा कुत्सितेन च । | |
| सिद्ध्यादिकमवाप्नोति सर्वोत्कृष्टेव कर्मणा ॥ | 20 |

Prosperity and adversity depend upon one's conduct in past lives; they are of one's own making and (as the wheel of time rotates) successively visit everyone in their lives like the revolving wheel of the chariot; hence there is no cause to lament. It is also said that in Bhārata, one experiences the fruition of one's good or evil actions without which the Karma does not get destroyed even in crores of Kalpas. That one must necessarily experience the fruit of one's Karma is said to have been declared by Lord Kṛṣṇa in the Veda. cf. DB.IX.40.70-74:

सम्पत्तिर्वा विपत्तिर्वा. नश्वरा श्रमरूपिणी ।
 पूर्वस्य कर्मायत्ता च स्वयं कर्ता तयोरपि ।
 सर्वेषां च भवत्येव शश्वज्जन्मनि जन्मनि ॥
 चक्रनेमिक्रमेणैव तत्र का परिदेवना ।
 उक्तं हि स्वकृतं कर्म भुज्यतेऽखिलभारते ॥
 शुभाऽशुभस्य यत्किञ्चित् स्वकर्मफलभुक् पुमान् ।
 नाऽभुक्तं श्रीयते कर्म कल्पकोटिशतैरपि ॥
 अवश्यमेव भोक्तव्यं कृतं कर्म भुभाऽशुभम् ।
 इत्येवमुक्तं वेदे च कृष्णेन परमात्मना ॥

Just as a potter creates a pot with the help of the clay, the rod, the platter and the wheel, the creator dispenses the rewards by the (continuous) string of Karma cf. IX. 40.88-89a:

यथा दण्डेन चक्रेण शरावेण श्रमेण च ।
 कुम्भं निर्माति निर्माता कुम्भकारो मृदा भुवि ॥
 तथैव कर्मसूत्रेण फलं दाता ददाति च ।

Even the imprecations incurred or shower of blessings received, prosperity or adversity are explained as an expression of cause and effect or the fruit of Karma. For, the Karma accumulated in innumerable births do not leave the doer but follow him like his own shadow. cf. DB. IX. 40. 76b-78a:

कर्मणा ब्रह्मशापं च कर्मणा च शुभाशिषम् ।
 कर्मणा च महालक्ष्मीं लभेदैन्यञ्च कर्मणा ।
 कोटिजन्मार्जितं कर्म जीविनामनुगच्छति ॥
 न हि त्यजेद्विना भोगं तच्छायेव पुरन्दर ।

Nahuṣa who was consecrated Indra, fell from his exalted position and was transformed into a python on account of his infatuation for Indrāṇī, arrogance towards the Brāhmaṇas/sages and consequent to the curse of sage Agasti cf. DB. III. 29.51b-52:

नहुषः पतितो भूमौ शापादजगराकृतिः ॥
 इन्द्राणीं कामयानस्तु ब्राह्मणानवमन्य च ।
 अगस्तिक्रोधोत्सञ्जातः सर्पदेहो महीपतिः ॥

Another instance quoted by DB is that of Nimi and the sage (Vasiṣṭha) who mutually cursed each other and thus experienced misery due to the power of cruel fate cf. DB. IV. 4.11:

ऋषिणाऽसौ निमिः शप्तस्तेन शप्तो मुनिः पुनः ।
 दुःखाद्दुःखतरं श्राप्तावुभावपि विधेर्बलात् ॥

Lakṣmī, who by the stroke of fate, became momentarily listless and engrossed in the Uccaiṣravas mounted by Revanta, incurred the displeasure of Viṣṇu and was cursed by him to be born as a mare cf. DB. VI. 17.61-62a:

त्वं हयं मत्समीपस्था समीक्ष्य यदि मोहिता ।
 वडवा भव वामोरु मर्त्यलोकेऽतिदारुणे ॥
 इति शप्ता रमा देवी हरिणा दैवयोगतः ।

Thus no man can exist without an act. cf. Gītā 3.5

न हि कश्चिद् क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत् ।

Every action binds him to the fruit thereof and to enjoy this fruit he takes birth again and again. The aggregate fruit of Karma can be exhausted only by enjoying it when the time (Kāla) is ripe.

Concept of Free-will in DB

The inexorable law of Karma holds that the present existence of a being is fashioned by his conduct in his past experiences. No one can escape the fruition of one's Karma. How Karma binds even gods is repeatedly explained by DB.

Thus nothing takes place except in accordance with the decree of fate. Birth and death, pleasure and pain, prosperity and adversity, victory and defeat are all willed by fate. What is destined to take place will take place—good or evil. No one on the face of earth can thwart destiny.

The DB repeatedly maintains that the present existence is predestined and everything that takes place is as decreed by fate, cf. भवितव्यं भवत्येव । IV 21.12; 4.28; अवश्यंभावि भावानां प्रतीकारो न विद्यते ॥ V 22.11; cf also III. 25.3; यद् भाव्यं तद् भविष्यति । III. 11.28.

The question arises as to whether there is any scope for freedom of will and individual effort or enterprise.

The DB makes frequent references to it by the terms puruṣa, puruṣakāra, upāya, udyama, pravṛtti, etc. There are occasions on which destiny is considered supreme and human effort or exertion as vain and useless.

As against these, occasions are galore in DB, on which effort, enterprise, exertion, industry, strategy or ways and means are considered and advised to be employed to save the situation instead of grieving over what has befallen by stroke of Fate or unfavourable Time. Even in instances where Daiva is held omnipotent, events unravel definite scope for Free will.

In the case of Indra and the gods, Bṛhaspati, the preceptor of all gods advises them that Daiva and Puruṣakāra are like Viṣṇu and Śiva and that some sort of strategy must be employed which is always rewarded by destiny cf. DB. I. 5.41:

दैवं पुरुषकारश्च देवेश सदृशावुभौ ।
उपायश्च विधातव्यो दैवात्फलति सर्वथा ॥

As per his advice all gods resort to Devī, find out the cause of the tragedy that has befallen (which was a curse incurred by Viṣṇu from Lakṣmī) and also successfully turn it to the delight and advantage of gods and to the extreme consternation of the camp of the demons (For Śumbha's thoughts, see below).

Devakī in her spirited reply to Vasudeva puts up a strong case for enterprise and human effort when faced with the dilemma of handing over their son to Kāṁsa. She pleads with Vasudeva that if whatever takes place is predestined and cannot be thwarted, then the science of medicine (Āyurveda) and all incantations (mantravāda) are false; similarly all effort is futile; all action is meaningless; Agniṣṭoma etc which is supposed to lead to heaven is useless cf. IV. 21.12-14.

Vasudeva had to concede that one must always try although the reward is (like birth and death) under the control of destiny cf. DB. IV. 21.19a:

उद्यमः खलु कर्तव्यः फलं दैवशानुगम् ॥

The victorious dānavas submit to their Lord, Prahlāda, that Daiva is supreme only to those who are devoid of any enterprise and as such they should wage war against the gods, cf. DB.IV.15.4a:

निरुद्यमानां दैवं हि प्रधानमसुराधिप ॥

Bṛhaspati, the preceptor of all gods, advises Indra not to lose courage in the face of adversity. Even sages make all efforts towards liberation and engage themselves in yoga and dhyāna although the result is controlled by destiny. Hence one must put in as much effort as is demanded by the occasion cf. DB. V. 4.29-30:

उद्यमः सर्वथा कार्यो यथापौरुषमात्मनः ।

मुनयोऽपि हि मुक्त्यर्थमुद्यमैकरताः सदा ॥

दैवाधीनञ्च जानन्तो योगध्यानपरायणाः ।

तस्मात्सदैव कर्तव्यो व्यवहारोदितोद्यमः ॥

Bṛhaspati continues to urge Indra to marshal all help against Mahiṣa. Fate or destiny must always be faced with effort cf. DB. V. 4.36b:

उद्यमे योजयेन्नूनं भवितव्यं सुराधिप ॥

Mahiṣa also gives expression to his thoughts on fate and enterprise as follows: Victory or defeat in war is always governed by fate. Strategists do not admit of Daiva. It is not seen by anyone and so the wise call it adṛṣṭa. What is the proof of its existence? It is only an excuse posed by cowards. The powerful do not experience Daiva anywhere. Enterprise and fate distinguish the courageous from the cowards cf. DB. V. 12.29-30a:

न समर्थजनानां हि दैवं कुत्रापि लक्ष्यते ।

उद्यमो दैवमेतौ हि शूरकातरयोर्मतम् ॥

Bṛhaspati gives identical advice to the gods tormented by Śumbha. Some hold Daiva to be supreme but the strategists say Daiva to be meaningless. Fate and expedient are the two options to beings; one must not depend on Daiva alone. One must always pursue an expedient/strategem after proper deliberation. This is the counsel of the eminent. For there is no requital of predestination cf. V. 22.11-14a:

अवश्यं भावि भावानां प्रतीकारो न विद्यते ।

उपायस्त्वथ कर्तव्यः इति शिष्टानुशासनम् ॥

दैवं हि बलवद् केचित्प्रवदन्ति मनीषिणः ।

उपायवादिनो दैवं प्रवदन्ति निरर्थकम् ॥

दैवं चैवाप्युपायश्च द्वावेवाभिमतो नृणाम् ।

केवलं दैवमाश्रित्य न स्थातव्यं कदाचन ॥

उपायः सर्वथा कार्यो विचार्य स्वधिया पुनः ।

When Śumbha was advised not to go to war with Devī but to lie low biding for an opportune time, he frowns at his advisers and holds that Kāla is only instrumental whereas Daiva is supreme. It rains not in Śrāvaṇa alone. There are untimely rains even in Mārgaśīrṣa, Pauṣa, Māgha and even in Phālguna. It is destiny that wills everything which no one can thwart cf. DB. V. 31.5a-7:

न वर्षति च पर्जन्यः श्रावणे मासि सर्वथा ॥

कदाचिन्मार्गशीर्षे वा पौषे माघेऽथ फाल्गुने ।

अकाले वर्षतीवाशु तस्मान्मुख्यो न चास्त्ययम् ॥

कालो निमित्तमात्रं तु दैवं हि बलवत्तरम् ।

दैवेन निर्मितं सर्वं नान्यथा भवतीत्यदः ॥

Though he holds Daiva to be supreme, he himself comes to the conclusion that one must persevere in accordance with the foreseen events cf. DB. V. 27.29b:

उद्यमस्तादृशो भूयाद्यादृशी भवितव्यता ॥

He also agrees with the view of the learned expounders of perseverance that Daiva is a myth. Wishes do not materialize without the application of effort. Only cowards say 'What is destined to happen will happen'. Flour is obtained from grain only with application of effort; merely standing in front of the grinder does not help. Perseverance always leads to success cf. DB. V. 27.37, 40-41a:

उद्यमेन विना कामं न सिध्यन्ति मनोरथाः ।

कातरा एव जल्पन्ति यद्भाव्यन्तद्भविष्यति ॥

चक्रीसमीपे संविष्टा. संस्थिता पिष्टकारिणी ।

उद्यमेन विना पिष्टं न भवत्येव सर्वथा ॥

उद्यमे च कृते कार्यसिद्धिं यात्येव सर्वथा ।

Thus DB strongly advocates human efforts and perseverance.

THE CHURNING-MYTH IN THE BHĀGAVATA PURĀṆA
(VIII, 5, 15-VIII, 12, 47)

By

GOPINATH PANDA

[समुद्रमन्थनस्याख्यानं विविधपुराणेषु प्राप्यते । अस्मिन् निबन्धे श्रीमद्भागवतपुराणे
प्राप्तस्य समुद्रमन्थनाख्यानस्य साङ्गोपाङ्गं विवेचनं प्रस्तुतम् ।]

The account of the myth in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa is the most extensive of all the churning-myths narrated before. The myth is narrated in the eighth book of the Bhāgavata and it comprises 348 verses. Out of these 348 verses almost three chapters comprising 149 verses speak of the fight between gods and demons. It must be admitted that the Bhāgavata has given a new literary shape to the churning-myth. On a comparison of the text of the Bhāgavata with the text of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, one can notice that the redactor of the Bhāgavata is well acquainted with churning-myth of Vi. and to some extent he made use of the churning-myth. of the Vi. as his model. The Comparison of the text of Viṣṇu and that of Bhā. makes it clear.

- (i) After the Universe is deserted by Lakṣmī all sorts of misfortune befall. The gods approach Brahmā, who advises them to take shelter under Viṣṇu. (Vi. I. 9. 35b-37 and Bhā. VIII. 5. 21-23).
- (ii) Finally accompanied by the gods Brahmā goes to Viṣṇu and chants a hymn of eulogy in his honour (Vi. I. 9, 40-57 and Bhā. VIII. 5. 26-50).
- (iii) In Vi. Brahmā's hymn is followed by the prayer of the gods. But in Bhā. there is just the reference that lord Viṣṇu showed himself after the gods had offered their prayer to him (*evam stutaḥ Suragaṇair bhagavān Harir-īśvaraḥ* VIII. 6. 1.)
- (iv) After the appearance of lord Viṣṇu before the gods, Brahmā and the celestials repeat their prayer to Viṣṇu (Vi. I 9. 69-74) and Bhā. VIII. 6.8-15 (Prayer of Brahmā).
- (v) Both Vi. and Bhā. omit what the gods speak to Brahmā regarding the state of affairs of the world destitute of Lakṣmī. The texts just note that the gods report the matter to Brahmā.

- (vi) In Vi. the line reads *Yathāvat Kathito devair Brahmā* I. 9. 35 a, in Bhā. it reads *sarva vijnāpayām cakruḥ praṇatāḥ parameṣṭine* VIII.5. 18b. On the contrary in both the versions of Vi. and Bhā. there is the reply of Brahmā to the gods. In Vi. the reply of Brahmā that lord Viṣṇu should be approached is given in I.9. 35 b, 36-37; in Bhā. VIII. 5. 21-23 constitute the reply of Brahmā. Finally accompanied by the gods Brahmā goes to Viṣṇu who remains unseen and unmanifested in both the texts. In Vi. I. 9. 40-57 comprise Brahmā's prayer to Viṣṇu, and in Bhā. VIII. 5. 26-50 comprise his prayer. After the prayer of Brahmā is over in six verses (Vi. I. 9. 69-74) the gods offer their prayer to Viṣṇu. Bhā. does not contain the prayer of the gods to Viṣṇu, but there is just the reference that gods had also offered their prayer to Viṣṇu (*evam stutaḥ suragaṇair bhagavān Hariśvaraḥ* VIII.6.1). Thus extolled by the hosts of gods, the almighty lord Viṣṇu appeared before them. But as a matter of fact in Bhā. it is only Brahmā who has offered his prayer to Viṣṇu, not the gods. In both the texts after the prayer of Brahmā and the gods there follows the appearance of Viṣṇu (Vi. I. 9.66 and Bhā. VIII. 6. 16).
- (vii) After the appearance of Viṣṇu there follows the prayer of the gods under the leadership of Brahmā both in Vi. I.9.69-74 and Bhā. VIII. 6. 8-15.
- (viii) Having listened to the prayer in both the texts Viṣṇu promises all help and assistance to the gods (Vi. I.9. 76-81 and Bhā. VIII. 6. 18-25).

Thus it is clear that the redactor of Bhā. has narrated the churning-myth definitely on the model of the account given in the Vi. The author of Bhā. has not only borne in mind the account of the churning-myth of the Vi. but also he is acquainted with all earlier traditions relating to the churning-myth. The Bhā. narrates in detail the origin of poison from the Ocean, its devouring by Śiva, and the Rāhu-episode (Bhā. VIII 7. 18-43 and VIII. 9. 24-26). In Vi. these accounts like origin of poison or its devouring or the Rāhu-episode are missing. Besides in two different slokas the Bhā. gives two different reasons for which the gods approach Brahmā for help.

- (i) In their fight with the demons gods fell dead in large number and did not rise again.

- (ii) Because of the curse of Durvāsas all the three worlds had been deserted by Lakṣmī, in consequence there was no sacrifice; therefore, the gods used to starve. On the whole it appears that the Bhā. has taken Vi. as the model; side by side it collected and arranged different elements of the churning-myths narrated before. And without giving any loose end the text has presented the myth in a fullfledged consolidated form.

Now we present here the further development of the churning-myth as presented in Bhā. Viṣṇu appears before the gods and advises them to unite with the demons. All kinds of plants, creepers and herbs are cast into the Ocean. With mount Mandara as the churning-rod and Vāsuki as the cord the gods and the demons are ready for the churning. With the sole purpose of glorifying Viṣṇu Bhā. here introduces a few anecdotes and embellishments. Besides Brahmā lord Śiva also accompanies the gods who approach Viṣṇu. The gods and the demons as per the advice of Viṣṇu uproot the mount Mandara and carry it to the sea-shore. Unfortunately they fail to carry the mount to the destination. They are crushed under the heavy weight of Mandara. Finding them disheartened lord Viṣṇu arrives there on the back of Garuḍa. He revives the gods by his mere look. Placing the mount on the back of Garuḍa and mounting the bird, Viṣṇu flies to the sea-shore. Garuḍa takes down the mount from the shoulder and places it on the sea-shore.

When the churning started the mount Mandara sank into the Ocean due to want of support. Assuming the form of a tortoise Viṣṇu bore the mount on his back. When churning continues for a longtime and nectar does not originate Visnu himself takes part in the churning.

As per the text of the Bhā. the entities originated from the Ocean are (i) the poison (halāhala). Out of compassion for the living beings Śiva drinks the poison. And Śiva himself declares that one incurs the pleasure of Viṣṇu when one becomes merciful to one's fellow beings. (*pumṣaḥ kṛpayato bhadre sarvātmā prīyate Hariḥ* - VIII. 7. 40 a). Next come out (ii) the cow Surabhi, (iii) the horse Uccaiḥśravas, (iv) the elephant Airāvata, (v) the jewel Kaustubha, (vi) the Pārijāta tree, (vii) the Apsarasas, (viii) the goddess Śrīḥ who is worshipped in shape of an idol as per the model presented in the Vi. By the time of the composition of the Bhā. the cult of worship of Lakṣmī had been an established fact. Therefore, with the appearance of the goddess Lakṣmī, Indra presents her the most-beautiful throne. The seers lay down the procedure of her ablutions according to the scriptural ordinance; the river Ganges presents

her sacred water in golden jars. Holding a wreath of lotus flowers in one of her hands, she chooses Viṣṇu for her husband. In contrast to the version in Padma Purāṇa and Vi. we can see here that goddess Lakṣmī is not the central figure of the version of Bhā. In Padma Purāṇa and Vi. the churning started for getting back Lakṣmī who had disappeared; but here the attainment of nectar is the main purpose. Therefore, in the concluding portion of the list of objects originating from the milk-ocean comes Śrīḥ as a matter of course. (ix) After Lakṣmī there appears in the form of a maiden Vāruṇī, the goddess presiding over wine. (x) Next there is the birth of Dhanvantari who carries in his hand a jar full of nectar. Thus we can notice that the redactor of the Bhā. in a balanced manner has arranged all the different traditions of the churning-myth.

Having noticed Dhanvantari along with the jar of nectar all the demons quickly snatch away the jar. Then there starts a fight between the gods and the demons for taking possession of the jar. Lord Viṣṇu appears in the form of a bewitching damsel. The demons charmed with the exquisite beauty of the damsel entrust the jar of nectar to her. Viṣṇu deceives the demons and gives the gods, the nectar which they drink with pleasure. Disguised in the garb of the gods. Svarbhānu (Rāhu) drinks the nectar when the moon and the Sun detect. Viṣṇu chops off his head when he is drinking the nectar. As a result the trunk which has not been touched by nectar drops down dead, while the head because of its touch with nectar becomes immortal. Since then the head of the demon devours the Sun and the moon on the new moon and the full moon respectively.

In Vi. we do not come across such glowing description of the beautiful damsel whose form and appearance had been assumed by Viṣṇu. In Bhā. the description of the physical beauty of that bewitching damsel and the demons' fascination for her are given in six verses of the concluding portion of ch. 8 (VIII. 8. 41-46) and in thirteen verses of the introductory portion of ch. 9. (VIII. 9.1-13). Besides in Vi. there is no reference to this anecdote of Rāhu taking the nectar, his detection by the Sun and the Moon or Rāhu devouring them in revenge. In a very short and sketchy manner the Vi. passes over this part of the myth (*māyayā mohayitvā tān Viṣṇuḥ strīrūpa-saṁsthitaḥ dānavebhyas tadādāya devebhyah pradadan prabhuḥ*. (Vi. I.9.109.).

Moreover in Vi. the redactor casually refers to the attack of the demons upon the gods who have already become immortal by drinking the nectar. The gods in their turn attack the demons and put them to flight (I.9.110b-111). On the other hand the Bhā. devotes two full chapters (X & XI) to the fight between the gods and the demons. The Mahābhārata

also gives a detailed description of the fight between the gods and the demons for taking possession of the nectar. It is not impossible that under the influence of the Mahābhārata-version, the redactor of Bhā. introduces such a lengthy description of the fight.

Finally the conflict between the gods and the demons comes to a close. Nārada advises the gods to give up the fight as they have already obtained nectar. Śukrācārya brings back to life the demons who were dead. Special mention is made of Bali, who though vanquished does not feel sorry as he is conversant with the truth that victory and defeat depend on one's good or evil destiny (*lokatattva vicakṣaṇaḥ*).

Even though the myth comes to a close here, the Bhā. adds an anecdote to it.

Having heard that lord Viṣṇu had deluded and deceived the demons by assuming the form of a damsel, Śiva expresses the desire to behold that enchanting form of Viṣṇu. Śiva approaches Viṣṇu in company with his consort Umā. As per his request, in a garden full of trees and creepers Viṣṇu appears in the form of a beautiful damsel. Looking intently at her Śiva loses all control over himself. Overpowered with love for the damsel Śiva follows her even while his spouse (Umā) is looking on. In course of pursuing and hugging her the semen of lord Śiva drops down. Then Śiva realises that he is befooled by the māyā of Viṣṇu. The woman he saw is nobody but Viṣṇu himself. Then Viṣṇu is full of admiration for Śiva because without any hint or suggestion from any quarter he himself has regained his natural state though primarily he was duped. Viṣṇu assures Śiva that his māyā consisting of guṇas would no longer overpower him (*seyam guṇamayī māyā na tvām abhi bhaviṣyati*. Bhā. VIII 12, 40 a).

This anecdote of Bhā. relating to Viṣṇu's appearance before Śiva in the form of a damsel reminds us of the narration of the churning-myth in the Lalitā episode of Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa (Bd. IV 10-13). In spite of many passages being identical in both Vāyu Purāṇa and Bd. there have come into existence numerous interpolations to both the texts. The Lalitā episode (ch. 10-13) of Bd. is an instance of interpolation. In this interpolated portion of Bd. Viṣṇu propitiates Lalitā (a synonym of goddess Durgā) when a terrible fight has started between the gods and the demons for taking possession of the nectar. Viṣṇu propitiates Lalitā; in consequence of concentrated meditation becomes identical in form and appearance with her. Lalitā with exquisite beauty dupes the demons who gladly surrender her the vessel of nectar.

After making the gods and the demons seated in different rows for distributing nectar, she distributes the entire quantity of nectar among the

gods. Having placed the empty vessel of nectar before the demons, she disappears. On getting the information that Viṣṇu assumed the form of Lalitā, Śiva accompanied by his consort Pārvatī comes to Viṣṇu and requests him to show him that beautiful form. After being repeatedly requested by Śiva, with single minded devotion, Viṣṇu meditates on Lalitā and assumes a matchlessly miraculous form of a woman. Overtaken by love Śiva runs after her. Somehow Śiva catches hold of her and embraces her. In course of embracing the semen of Śiva drops down (Bd. IV, 10. 1-77). This anecdote in Bd. seems to have been composed under the influence of *śakti* cult.

If we count verse-wise, the contents of the Bhā. would be three times the contents of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa. But even then the extent of the didactic part has not developed in Bhāgavata proportionately. All the statements regarding theology and philosophy of Vaiṣṇavism are mainly found in the following portions of the Bhā. Eighth Book, 5. 21-23; 5.26-50; 6.8-15; 12. 4-13.

As stated in the verses referred to above Viṣṇu is represented as the prime source of all beings including Brahmā and Śiva. It is through his *māyā* that Viṣṇu creates. For the purpose of creation, continuance and dissolution of the universe, this *māyā* consisting of three *guṇas* (in the form of *rajas*, *sattva* and *tamas* respectively) gets united with Viṣṇu. In the prayer of Brahmā (VIII, 5.26-50) we notice that Viṣṇu is given the same position as the Brahman of the Upaniṣads.

The epithets like *guhāśaya*, *niṣkala*, *apratarkya*, *vacasānirūktam*, *akṣaram*, *avyakta* only prove that Viṣṇu has been put on a par with Brahman. On the other hand the epithets like *mahāpuruṣa*, *mahābibhūti*, *uparavīrya* etc. present Viṣṇu as a personal god.

It is worth noting that in Bhā. VIII, 7. 21-35 the living beings go to Śiva for help when there is danger from poison originated from the churning. They address him as the highest divinity as the absolute principle; and in Bhā. Viṣṇu also is represented like that. Thus in the beginning of the eulogy, the living beings address Śiva as *bhūtātman*, *ātman*, *brahmaparamam*, *svadṛk*. Further it is said that Śiva is the lord of bondage and liberation (*bandha-mokṣayoḥ*) that means, he is the unique lord competent to enthrall and liberate the whole world. Further with the creation, preservation and destruction of the world Śiva assumes the name of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva (*dhatse Brahmā - Viṣṇu - Śivā - bhidhām*). The weight of these expressions can be judged when we think of the situation faced by Śiva at the time of affliction of living beings due to the deadly poison. At that time Śiva tells Pārvatī that Viṣṇu is pleased

with a person who shows mercy to created beings (*pum̐saḥ Kṛpayato bhadre sarvātmā priyate Hariḥ* VIII.7.40). It is interesting to note that in the Prahllāda legend of the Pūrāṇa-texts the ideal that is emphasised is sympathy for all beings for common good-will but here the anecdote of the devouring of poison by Śiva refers to help and assistance in a particular situation.

Śiva appears in Bhā. as an ideal devotee of Viṣṇu. If one considers the conclusion of the story where Viṣṇu (VIII. 12. 38-40) praises Śiva because Śiva has come to realise the deceptive nature of the female form of Viṣṇu, one gets the impression that the Bhā. wants to grant or admit a special position to Śiva in its motivated sympathy for Saivism; but this special position given to Śiva is definitely inferior to the honorable position of Viṣṇu. Once again here is an instance of religious tolerance in our country leading to propagation of inclusiveness.

SPORTIVE DANCE (RĀSALILĀ) OF KṚṢṆA IN PRINCIPAL PURĀNAS : A CRITICAL APPRAISAL

By

A.K. MISHRA

[श्रीकृष्णस्य रासलीलाया विवरणं केषुचित् पुराणेषु प्राप्यते । अस्मिन् निबन्धे लेखकेन रासक्रीडाया स्वरूपमर्थं च प्रदाय पुराणेषु प्राप्ताया रासलीलायास्तुलनात्मक-मध्ययनं प्रस्तुतम् ।]

Introduction :

The word *rāsa* is derived from *rasa*. The concept of *rasa* as defined by Mammaṭa or Viśvanātha Kavirāja is not befitting here. *Raśa* means Kṛṣṇa Himself¹. Paraṃbrahma Kṛṣṇa desires to play, through which He becomes many, that is *rāsalilā*. In the mythological point of view *rāsalilā*² is a circle dance, where the gopīs, Rādhā and all creatures of the universe are attracted to Kṛṣṇa. It is initially introduced in the *Harivaṃśa* by the name *hallīsaka*³. In Classical Sanskrit literature the word *rāsa* is mentioned many a times. In the *Sarasvatikaṇṭhābharaṇa rāsalilā* is introduced as *maṇḍalīnṛṭya* and called *hallīsaka*⁴. Bāṇabhaṭṭa also defines *rāsa* in his *Harṣacarita*⁵.

In the *Nāṭyaśāstra* of Bharata the circle dance is placed under the *ārabhaṭī* style⁶. For *ārabhaṭī* style Bāṇabhaṭṭa states that, the actors when dance with a circle, make free their hair and wave it from side to side. The above mentioned characteristic is found in the gopīs of *Harivaṃśa*

1. *Raso via saḥ / Taittirīyopaniṣad - 2-7-1*

In the *Sāhityadarpaṇa* it is found ब्रह्मास्वादसहोदरः ... ।

2. According to J.S. Hawley: A true circle, it is purposeless, it produces nothing, it is a dance of pure pleasure, love and nothing else. (At play with Kṛṣṇa, Princeton Univ. Press, Guildford, Surry)

3. In the Colophon of *Harivaṃśa*, *Viṣṇuparvan*, XX

In the com. of *Harivaṃśa* by Ācārya Nilakantha it is found that :

हल्लीसकक्रीडनं एकस्यैव पुंसः बहुभिः स्त्रीभिः क्रीडनं ॥

4. *Sarasvatikaṇṭhābharaṇa* 2/156.

5. *Harṣacarita*, *dvitīya ucchavāsa*.

6. प्लुष्टावपात-प्लुत-गर्जितानि च्छेदानि मायाकृतमिन्द्रजालम् ।

चित्राणि यूथानि च यत्र नित्यं तां तादृशीमारभटीं वदन्ति ॥ *Nāṭyaśāstra*, 20/26.

*Purāṇa*⁷ at the time of circle dance. According to Saṅkara⁸ : where eight or sixteen or thirty-two individuals are dancing, it is called sportive dance.

1. Who are the gopīs ?

The explanation of the word gopī is found in two different manners, first is ब्रह्म गोपायति समावृणोतीति गोपी,⁹ she (*māyā*) envelops the Brahman, second is स्वातिरिकास्तित्वभ्रमं नामरूपाभ्यां गोपायतीति गोपी, here also *gopī* denotes *māyā*.

The gopīs are divided into three categories according to Vaiṣṇavites¹⁰. First one is *sādhana-siddhā* second is *nitya-siddhā* and the third one is *devaśvarūpā*¹¹

2. RĀSALILĀ FOUND IN PURĀṆAS :

2.1 *Harivaṃśa* :

Rāsalilā is found in the twentieth chapter of *Viṣṇu-pravan*. It is eulogized here in a subtle form. In this *purāṇa* the character of Rādhā is not introduced, the exceptional characteristic of a gopī as a partner of Kṛṣṇa is eulogized, dispersion of the gopīs from Kṛṣṇa is not mentioned, they are married,¹² too lovely and innocent.¹³ Kṛṣṇa is longing after the beauty of the gopīs.¹⁴

2.2 *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* :

The thirteenth chapter of the fifth book is adorned by the *rāsalilā* of Parambrahma. The time is full-moon night of autumn. The only male person Kṛṣṇa is dancing among the gopīs, they feel, Kṛṣṇa is within them. Image of Kṛṣṇa is found in every place of *rāsa*. Nature is depicted here in

7. तासां ग्रथितसीमन्ताः रतिं नीत्वाऽऽकलकृताः ।

चारु विस्रंसिरे केशाः कुचाग्रे गोपयोषिताम् ॥

(*Harivaṃśa Purāṇa, Viṣṇu Parvan, XX, 34*)

8. अष्टौ षोडश द्वात्रिंशद्यत्र नृत्यन्ति नायकाः ।

पिण्डो बन्धानुसारेण तन्नृतं रासकं स्मृतम् ॥

From *rāsa* and *rāsānvayī Kāvya*.

9. *Rāsapañcādhyāyī - eka Sāṃskṛtika adhyayana*. Rashika Vihari Joshi, P-32.

10. *Early History of the Vaiṣṇava Faith and Movement in Bengal*, S.K.De, Calcutta, 1942, P-156.

11. For detailed information see *Śrīrāsapañcādhyāyī eka Sāṃskṛtika adhyayana*, Rashika Vihari Joshi, Delhi, 1961, P-32.

12. *Harivaṃśa, Viṣṇu Parvan, XX, 24*.

13. *Ibid*, 31.

14. *Ibid*, 23.

a different form; golden fruits and corals of jewels are found in *rāsamaṇḍala*; trees, creeping plants, arbour, moon, sweetsmell, bank of Yamunā, flowers etc. are not found. Kṛṣṇa sits on a pedestal (*maṇḍapa*) which is decorated by different kinds of gems and the gopīs are dancing with a circle. The character of Rādhā is not available here.

2.3 *Padma-Purāṇa*

The circle dance of Kṛṣṇa is mentioned in the eighty-third chapter of the *Pātāla Khaṇḍa*. It is encircled by the cows, boys and the gopīs. Balarāma the brother of Kṛṣṇa also participates. Here the names of different gopīs are mentioned.¹⁵ Rādhā is supreme among the gopīs, she is the nearest to Kṛṣṇa. In the night Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā feel sleepy, but Kṛṣṇa out of desire asks Rādhā for the sport of *rati*, but Rādhā denies. Then they have started dice-play. Kṛṣṇa urges that he has won the game though he is defeated. Here neither Kṛṣṇa becomes invisible nor the gopīs are searching after Kṛṣṇa.

2.4 *Brahma Purāṇa* :

Rāsālilā of Kṛṣṇa is found in the one hundred eighty-ninth chapter of *Brahma Purāṇa*. It is depicted in the context of the killing of demon Ariṣṭa by Kṛṣṇa. In place of Rādhā a different kind of gopī is coming down, she cries because she can not participate in the circle dance of Kṛṣṇa. The incident of the clothes of gopīs being removed by Kṛṣṇa is not mentioned. Here also those gopīs are dancing encircling Kṛṣṇa and keep their hands on each other. They utter the prayers of Kṛṣṇa at the time of dancing.

2.5 *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* :

In the tenth book of *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* the circle dance is found in five chapters i.e. in the chapters 29th to 33rd Kṛṣṇa does not play his flute for invitation of the gopīs. He invites them by singing a song, and the gopīs arrive in selected spot a silent move. Exceptional characteristic of a gopī is mentioned, who is nearest to Kṛṣṇa, once Kṛṣṇa does not tolerate her selfishness and becomes invisible, after a bit of crying of her, Kṛṣṇa,

15. राधिका चित्ररेखा, च चन्द्रा, मदनसुन्दरी,
प्रिया, च श्रीमधुमती, शशिरेखा, हरिप्रिया,
सुवर्णशोभा, संमोहा, प्रेमरोमाञ्चरञ्जिता,
वैवर्ण्यवेद-संयुक्ता भावाशक्ता प्रियंवदा,,
सुवर्णमालिनी, शान्ता सुरास-रसिका तथा,
सर्वस्त्री-जीवना, दीनवत्सला, विमलाशया,,

presents himself there. The gopīs are also deserted by lord Kṛṣṇa because of their self-egoism.

2.6 *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* :

Rādhā is the supreme goddess in *rāsalilā* which is found in the fourth chapter of *Kṛṣṇajanmakhanda* of *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*. Sportive dance of Kṛṣṇa is here eulogized in mature form. In this *Purāṇa* depiction of *rāsalilā* is totally full of *sāttva*. But the arrangement of dance and surroundings of that are exotic. The *rāsamaṇḍala* is surrounded by different garden having sweet smelling flower trees, it has nine gates and three crores jeweled pitchers, develop the beauty of that place. There is a duplicate pond which looks beautiful with kinds of lotus flowers. By the sportive dance deities are also influenced, they look from the heaven and cast down the auspicious flowers.

3.0 PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS :

3.1 *Rāsalilā* :

Although the circle dance of Kṛṣṇa is found in *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* in a mature form, the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* develops the philosophical side. It is a process of the union of *ātman* and *paramātman*.

Though the gopīs are prohibited by their husbands for the dance of *rāsa* they do not retain, because they know perfectly that they have nothing except Kṛṣṇa. *Ātman* always wants to get salvation but due to the cherishing of *viṣaya* it is unable to attain. Here the gopīs are totally indifferent from the relish of earthly pleasure, they, therefore, intend to incorporate with Kṛṣṇa.

3.2 *The Gopīs* :

They are married¹⁶ and have no *kāma* at all, and are associated with Kṛṣṇa for pure *prema*¹⁷ only. But in the time of circle dance Kṛṣṇa is their husband and not *Paraṁbrahman*. If they accept Kṛṣṇa as *Paraṁbrahman* then all the process of circle dance may be disturbed. Because they will have to maintain distance from Kṛṣṇa and will behave Kṛṣṇa as *paramātman* not as husband¹⁸. Knowingly therefore, they ignore Kṛṣṇa as *Paraṁbrahman*. *Prema* of the gopīs for Kṛṣṇa is supernatural. Arrival of the gopīs near Kṛṣṇa is the symbol of that, the attainment of *jñāna*, which helps, in becoming *Brahmajñāna*. Then the devotee does not want to return back. Here also the gopīs are not interested to go back¹⁹.

16. *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, V, 29,20.

17. *Ibid*, 6.

18. *Ibid*, 12.

19. *Ibid*, 34.

3.3 Kṛṣṇa :

Kṛṣṇa is the Paramātman of this sportive dance. The expressions used in the *Rāsapañcādhyāyī* of the *Bhāgavata* proves the ever eternal and Parambrahmatva of Kṛṣṇa i.e. *Ātmārāmo'pyarīramat* (through delighting in self he sported), *Sākṣānmathamamathaḥ* (one who enamours cupid himself), *Āptakāmaḥ* (who has obtained all his desires), *Pūrṇakāmaḥ* (one who has all his desires fulfilled), *Yogesvaraḥ* (lord of the masters of yoga) and lastly the epithet Bhagavān applied to Kṛṣṇa—one who posses supers human powers.²⁰

3.4 Rādhā :

Rādhā is a character which is introduced in later period. Initially it is found in the *Padma Purāṇa*. She is the śakti of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is Puruṣa and Rādhā is Prakṛti: By the help of that śakti, Kṛṣṇa manipulates the universe. The Rādhā tattva also originates from Kṛṣṇa.²¹

In the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* it is clearly mentioned that, Kṛṣṇa is Parambrahman and Rādhā is Māyā.²²

Through *rāsalilā* the gopīs attain salvation, which is possible only through proper knowledge. It may be compared with the theme of *Kāthopaniṣad*. Initially Yama denies Naciketas for introducing to him the knowledge of salvation and lures him by different types of earthly desires. But he does not run after that, then Yama gives him the *brhmavidyā* through which he gets salvation. Likewise here Kṛṣṇa initially denies the association of the gopīs in the sportive dance and reminds their earthly desires like, their son, husband, wealth etc.²³ When they are not attracted towards that, they are permitted for the sportive dance. By the help of the circle dance they get salvation.²⁴

In the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* *rāsa* is the method through which *Jīva* becomes able to get salvation or attains Brahman.

Rāsa of Kṛṣṇa with the gopīs is not an allegory but is supposed to go on eternally. The *rāsalilā* is the divine-sport of the soul with its own self and its own potentialities.

20. Śrīdhara, on *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, X 29.

21. त्वं मे प्राणाधिका राधे! तव प्राणधिकोऽप्यहम् ।

न किञ्चिदावयोर्भिन्नमेकाङ्गं सर्वदैव हि ॥

Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa, IV,1,6,67.

22. राधया सह कृष्णाय पूर्णब्रह्म सनातनः ।

गोपीभिः सह जग्मुश्च मायाः श्रीकृष्णरूपिकाः ॥

Ibid, 28, 131/2, 132/1.

23. *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, 10,29,34.

24. Ibid, 45.

VEDIC KING MARUTTA IN THE EPICS AND THE PURĀṆA-S

By

MADHAVI R. NARSALAY

[वेदेतिहासपुराणेषु राजा मरुतः महान् यज्वा आसीत् इति वर्तते प्रतिपादितम् । तस्य यज्ञः महान् समृद्धियुक्तः आसीत् । स्वर्णस्यात्र प्राचुर्यमासीत् । तस्य यज्ञे मरुतः परिवेष्टारः आसन् । अस्मिन् निबन्धे विदुष्या लेखिकया वेदेतिहासपुराणानामाधारेण प्रदर्शितं यत् मरुतस्य महतो याज्ञिकरूपस्य विशेषरूपेण प्रतिपादनमेतेषु ग्रन्थेषु दृश्यते । तस्य शासनकर्मणः शासकरूपस्य च महत्त्वमधरीकृतं प्राप्यते ।]

Performance of *pūjā* is a Puranic ritual followed in every religious Hindu home. The ritual of *pūjā* ends with the chanting of *Mantrapuṣpāñjali*. The concluding verse of the *Mantrapuṣpāñjali* is :

मरुतः परिवेष्टारः मरुतस्यावसन्गृहे ।

आविक्षितस्य कामप्रेर्विश्वे देवाः सभासद इति ।

i.e. the Marut-s resided as distributors of food in the house of Marutta, the son of Avikṣit and who had fulfilled all his desires, all the gods were present at the gathering.

This verse raises certain questions viz: -

1. Who was king Marutta ?
2. What was the relation with the Marut-s?
3. How did this verse find place in the *Mantrapuṣpāñjali*?
4. In what capacity did the Marut-s participate in the sacrifice according to the *Mantrapuṣpāñjali*?
5. What was the place of king Marutta according to the Vedic, Epic and Puranic literature?

This paper aims at answering these questions.

The first verse of the *Mantrapuṣpāñjali*, is a mantra from the *Puruṣasūkta*. Apart from the first verse the remaining verses have a close connection with kingship : viz.

ॐ राजाधिराजाय प्रसह्यसाहिने । नमो वयं वैश्रवणाय कुर्महे ।

स मे कामान्कामकामाय मह्यम् । कामेश्वरो वैश्रवणो

ददातु । कुबेराय वैश्रवणाय । महाराजाय नमः ।

This verse occurs in the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka I. 31.6. It refers to the supreme king who symbolizes Kubera, the son of Viśravas. Oblations are offered to the sovereign king who is capable of fulfilling the desires of the propitiator.

The third verse occurs in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (*Ait Br.*) is as follows:

... साम्राज्यं भौज्यं स्वराज्यं वैराज्यं पारमेष्ठ्यं राज्यं माहाराज्यमाधिपत्यमहं समं तपर्यामि स्यात्सार्वभौम सार्वायुष आंतादापराधार्त्तृथिव्यै समुद्रपर्यन्ताया एकराडिति ...

The explanation of this verse requires a background of the *Aindramahābhīṣeka* ceremony. (*Ait. Br.*).

The gods with Prajāpati as their chief, pointing to Indra said, 'He is the most vigorous, most valiant, most perfect, accomplishes any task in the best way. Let us install him as the king'. They brought him a throne seat, which was made up of the ṛc form. The entire seat was made up of metres. The goddess of glory was its covering, goddess of fortune its pillow, Savitṛ and Bṛhaspati its fore legs, Vāyu and Pūṣan its hind legs, Mitra and Varuṇa its two top boards and the Aśvins the two side boards.

Indra ascended the throne seat and requested other gods to ascend it with the metres, *stoma*, *sāman* etc. He declared – 'I ascend for obtaining the fulfillment of the highest desires for becoming a great king, for supreme mastership, independence and long residence.

After Indra seated himself on this throne-seat the Viśve Deva-s said—'Indra cannot achieve any feat if he is not publicly proclaimed as a hereo, if done so he can achieve any feat. They proclaimed him as the universal ruler (*sāmrājya*). enjoyer of pleasures (*bhaujya*), independent ruler (*svārājya*) distinguished king (*vairājya*) one who has attained the highest desires (*pārameṣṭhya*) etc.

Vasu-s inaugurated him in the eastern direction and he obtained the title *samraj* i.e. universal monarch.

Rudra-s inaugurated him in the southern direction and he obtained *bhaujya* i.e. enjoyment of pleasures.

Āditya-s inaugurated him in the western direction and he obtained *svārāja* i.e. independent rule.

The Visve Deva-s inaugurated him in the northern direction for *vairājya* i.e. distinguished rule. *Vairājya* can be understood as situation without a king. But a king cannot be inaugurated for creating a kingless situation.

The *Sādhyā-s* and the *Āptyā-s* inaugurated him in the middle region which is the firmly established footing of kingship i.e. *rājya*.

The *Marut-s* and *Angiras* inaugurated him for attaining fulfillment of the highest wishes i.e. *pārameṣṭhya*, the positions of a great king i.e. *Māhārājya*, supreme ruler i.e. *sārvabhauma* and for a long regime i.e. *sārvāyusya*.

In this way when Indra was *inaugurated* he became a supreme, sovereign king. If a king is *inaugurated* in this way, he begets the above mentioned epithets¹ Marutta was *inaugurated* with the same Aindramahābhīṣeka according to the *Ait. Br.*

To know the nature of Aindramahābhīṣeka one must understand that the *Ait. Br.* constantly refers to Rājasūya as a *kṣatriyayajña*. According to Dr. Dange S. A., 'Aindramahābhīṣeka seems to be an extension or the offshoot of the Rājasūya. It incorporates the idea of the human being as on the same lines as consecration that of Indra, the god. However, there seems to be a deeper implication.² This ritual is for making the king, who has performed the Rājasūya, the lord of kings. Marutta was consecrated with the same ritual.

The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (*Sat. Br.*)³ and the *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*⁴ associate king Marutta with the performance of the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice, specifically with the *Atirātra* and the *Mahāvratā* sacrifices. *Marut-s* accompanied our king as *parivestr-s*, *Visve Deva-s* as *sabhāsada-s* and *Agni* as the *kṣattr*. Both the texts mention that the *yajamāna* performing the same ritual and reciting the same *gāthā* would beget the same fruit.

King Marutta figures in the two epics viz., the *Rāmāyaṇa* (*Rām.*) and the *Mahābhārata* (*Mbh.*) as well as the *Purāṇa-s* viz., The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (*Bhāg. Pu.*), *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (*Viṣ. Pu.*) and the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* (*Mark. Pu.*).

1. Aitareya Brāhmaṇa : VIII. 4 15.
2. Dr. Dange S.A., *Vedic Sacrifices : Early Nature*, Aryan Books International, New Delhi, 2000, Vol II, p. 346.
3. *Sat. Br.* :- XIII. 5.4.6. एतेऽएव पूर्वे अहनि । महाव्रतमतिरात्रस्तेन ह मरुत्तऽअविक्षित-
ऽईन्ऽआयोगवो राजा तस्य ह ततो मरुत्तः परिवेष्टारोऽग्निः क्षता विश्वे देवाः सभासदो बभ्रुवुस्त-
देतद्गाथयाऽभिगीतम्मरुत्तः परिवेष्टारो मरुत्तस्यावसन् गृहे आविक्षितस्याग्निः क्षता विश्वे देवाः सभासद
इति मरुतो ह वै तस्य परिवेष्टारः अग्निः क्षता विश्वे देवाः सभासदो भवन्ति योऽश्रवमेधेन यजते ।
4. *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta sūtra* : X VI.9 14-15.
महाव्रतमतिरात्रस्तेन ह मरुत्तऽअविक्षित ईजे । तदुतैषापि यज्ञगाथा गीयते । मरुत्तः परिवेष्टारो
मरुत्तस्यावसन्गृहे आविक्षितस्याग्निः क्षता विश्वे देवाः सभासदः ॥

In the epic *Rām.* (Utt. 18) Marutta occurs as a king performing the Māheśvara Sattrā with the help of Samvarta at Uśīrabīja.⁵ According to the story : 'Many gods arrive on the scene in the form of birds and animals. When Rāvaṇa enters the sacrificial place they become frightened and start running helter-skelter. King Marutta challenges Rāvaṇa to enter into a combat, but was stopped by Samvarta his preceptor. Samvarta says that the Māheśvara Sattrā if left unaccomplished would reduce the family of the sacrificer into ashes. Marutta agrees and gives up the combat. However, Rāvaṇa considers this step as his victory and destroys the sacrifice.'

In the *Mbh* there are as many as 63 occurrences of king Marutta. King Marutta has been included in the list of kings, who have performed sacrifices and have attained the higher abode⁶ He has been referred to as a king who performs sacrifices in the northern direction there by reaching heaven⁷ King Marutta's rule was a parameter of supremacy. Māndhātṛ had to defeat Marutta in order to prove his supremacy.⁸

The story of king Marutta occurs in detail in the Āśvamedhika Parvan of the *Mbh*. Marutta approaches Bṛhaspati to perform the Āśvamedha sacrifice. Bṛhaspati refuses to accept the position of an officiating priest in the sacrifice of Marutta, as he is a mere mortal. Marutta approaches Samvarta, the brother of Bṛhaspati, who readily agrees to do so in order to score a point over Bṛhaspati and Indra. He advises Marutta to propitiate Lord śiva and obtain wealth for the sacrifice, which the king promptly undertakes. Fearing that Marutta would surpass in greatness, Indra sends

5. *Rām* : Utt. 18.16.

माहेश्वरमिदं सत्रमसमाप्तं कुलं दहेत् ।
दीक्षितस्य कुतो युद्धं क्रोधित्वं दीक्षिते कुतः ॥

6. *Mbh* : Ādi. P. 1.164-166 .

महत्सु राजवंशेषु गुणैः समुदितेषु च ।
जाता दिव्यास्त्रविदुषः शक्रप्रतिमतेजसः ॥
धर्मेण पृथिवीं जित्वा यज्ञैरिष्ट्वाप्तदक्षिणैः ।
अस्मिँल्लोके यशः प्राप्य ततः कालवशं गताः ॥
मरुतं मनुमिक्ष्वाकुं गयं भरतमेव च ।
रामं दाशरथिं चैव शशविन्दुं भगीरथम् ।

7. *Ibid* : Śānti P. 29.81.

य अङ्गारं हि नृपतिं मरुत्तमसितं गयम् ।
अङ्गं बृहद्रथं चैव मान्धाता समरेऽजयत् ॥

8. *Ibid* : Udyoga P. 109.20

अत्र (उत्तरस्यां दिशि) राज्ञा मरुत्तेन यज्ञेनेष्टं द्विजोत्तम ।
उशीरबीजे विप्रर्षे यत्र जाम्बूनदं सरः ॥

Agni to prevent him from performing the sacrifice, However, Agni gets defeated in verbal combat with Samvarta. In the end, due to the power of the mantra-s of Samvarta, all gods led by Indra arrive on the sacrificial scene and assist him in performing the sacrifice, to the extent that they helped Marutta in the capacity of *pariveṣṭr-s* (i.e. attendants serving food/waiters?)⁹ However, there is no reference to the arrival of Marut-s on the sacrificial scene.

Only at one place in the *Mbh* (Śānti Parvan 29.20) there is the reference of Marut-s drinking Soma in the sacrifice of Marutta and acted as attendants serving food in the feast of Marutta¹⁰

The great epic refers to a different aspect of this king (Śān. P 160). Brahman created a terrible being, which took the form of a deadly sword named Dharmagarbha. This sword symbolized Daṇḍa, the rule of law and order. Marutta is referred to as wielding this sword.

Bhīṣma has quoted a verse attributed to Marutta that refers to the opinion of Bṛhaspati. The verse says that, one who acts adversely to the kingdom or any of its constituents, may he be one's preceptor, and he must be punished¹¹

The *Bhāg. Pu.* and the *viṣ. pu.* refer to king Marutta as a great sacrificer, in whose sacrifice Marut's arrive as *pariveṣṭr* i.e those serving food¹²

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- | | |
|--|---|
| 9. <i>Ibid</i> : Āśvamedhika P. 10.30 | ततो यज्ञो ववृधे तस्य राज्ञो देवा स्वयमन्नानि जहुः । यस्मिन् शक्रो ब्राह्मणैः पूज्यमानः सदस्योऽमूर्द्धरिमान्देवराजः । |
| 10. <i>Ibid</i> : Śānti P. 29.20 | आविक्षितस्य वै सत्रे विश्वे देवाः सभासदः । मरुतः परिवेष्टारः साध्याश्चासन्महात्मनः ॥ मरुद्गणा मरुत्तस्य यत्सोममपिबन्त ते । देवान्मनुष्यान्गन्धर्वानत्यरिच्यन्त दक्षिणाः । |
| 11. <i>Ibid</i> : Udyoga P. 178.28-29 Śānti. P.57.5-6 | मरुतेन हि राज्ञायं गीतः श्लोकः पुरातनः । राज्याधिकारे राजेन्द्र बृहस्पतिमतः पुरा ॥ गुरोरप्यलिप्तस्य कार्याकार्यमजानतः । उत्पथप्रतिपन्नस्य कार्यं भवति शासनम् ॥ |
| 12. <i>Bhāg. Pu.</i> IX.2.27-28 | मरुत्तस्य यथा यज्ञो न तथान्यस्य कश्चन । सर्वं हिरण्मयं त्वासीद् यत् किञ्चिच्चास्य शोभनम् ॥ अमाद्यदिन्द्रः सोमेन दक्षिणाभिर्द्विजातयः । मरुतः परिवेष्टारो विश्वेदेवा सभासदः ॥ |

The Viṣ. Pu. refers to the same fact of Marutta. Yet, it does mention another Marutta of the Turvasu dynasty, who was childless and adopted Duṣyanta of the Puru dynasty¹³

The Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa gives a detailed account of Marutta with his genealogy (Mār. Pu. 109ff)

Manu
|
Diṣṭa/Riṣṭa
|
Nābhāga
|
Bhananda
|
Vatsapri (cf. Vedic name Kāmāpri)
|
Praiṃśu
|
Khanitra
|
Kṣupa
|
Vivirṃsa
|
Khaninetra
|
Kārandhama
|
Avikṣit
|
Marutta

13. Viṣ. Pu. : IV. 6.2-5.

अथ तुर्वसोर्वशमवधारय । तुर्वसोर्वहिरात्मजः वह्नेर्मागो
भार्गाद्भानुस्ततश्च त्रयीसानुस्तस्माच्च करन्दमस्तस्यापि मरुतः ।
सोऽनपत्योऽभवत् । ततश्च पौरवं दुष्यन्तं पुत्रमकल्पयत् ।

According to the story narrated in the *Mār. Pu.* : 'Avikṣit saves Bhāminī, the daughter of a Gandharva king Viśāla from the hands of a demon named Dhṛḍhakeśa. Gods promise Avikṣit that he would get a heroic son, who will be a universal monarch and would embellish the seven continents. According to the prophecy Avikṣit gets a son. He is named Marutta because of the blessings invoked for him from the *Marut-s*.¹⁴

The Purāṇa states that gods like Indra and others acted as attendants serving for the Brāhmaṇa-s. He enters into a feud with the nāga-s because they poisoned sons of sages and polluted their sacrifices. The feud ends with the intervention of his father.' The Purāṇa states that gods like Indra and others acted as waiters for the Brahmaṇa-s in the sacrifice of Marutta¹⁵.

There are certain points to be noted based on the abovementioned facts:

1. Vedic Marutta is clearly associated with the performance of sacrifices like the Aindramahābhīṣeka (the qualification of which is the performance of the Rājasūya and the Aśvamedha sacrifices).
2. At both these sacrifices the king is connected with gods and specifically the Marut-s. None of the texts except the *Mark. Pu.* give an account of his relation with the Marut-s.

We have to infer the relationship between the Marut-s and king Marutta based on certain textual observations :

- Firstly, there is a striking similarity in the names of Marut-s and Marutta. The reason for this is mentioned in the *Mār. Pu.*

14. *Mār. Pu.* : 124.32-36

इमे शक्रादयः सर्वे लोकपालास्तथार्षयः ।
स्वस्ति कुर्वन्तु ते वीर वीर्यं चारिविनाशनम् ॥
मरुतु शिवायास्तु वाति पूर्वेण योऽरजाः ।
मरुते विमलोऽक्षीणोऽवैषम्यायास्तु दक्षिणः ॥
पश्चिमस्ते मरुद्वीर्यमुत्तमं ते प्रयच्छन् ।
बलं यच्छतु चोत्कृष्टं मरुते च तथोत्तरः ॥
इति स्वस्त्ययनस्यान्ते वागुवाचाशरीरिणी ।
मरुत्तवेति बहुशो यदिदं गुरुरब्रवीत् ॥
मरुत्त इति तेनायं भुवि ख्यातो भविष्यसि ।

15. *Ibid* : 136.16.

अमाद्यदिन्द्रं सोमेन दक्षिणाभिर्द्विजातयः ।
विप्राणां परिवेष्टारः शक्राद्यास्त्रिदशोत्तमाः ॥

- Secondly, if we refer to the character of Marut-s in the Veda-s, they are non oblation eaters¹⁶ and are often identified with common people.¹⁷ So their participation as *pariveṣṭr*-s can be understood.
- Thirdly in the Aindramahābhīṣeka episode they, along with the Aṅgiras bestowed upon Indra positions like *pārameṣṭhya*, *Māhārājya*, *adhirāja*, *svārājya* and *sārvāyuṣya*, which are of great importance to a sovereign monarch.
- Fourthly, their association with Indra is well known.
- Lastly, according to the *Ait. Br.* A king who has performed the Aindramahābhīṣeka is equated with Indra. Naturally Marut-s participate in his sacrifice.

Now in what capacity did they participate as guardsmen or waiters serving food ?

Sāyaṇācārya in his commentary on the *Ait. Br* understands the word *pariveṣṭārah* as *bhojanakāle pariveṣaṇakartārah*. *Pariveṣṭr* is a *kṛdanta* derived from *pari +viṣ* which means to cover, to surround, to encompass, to envelop etc. Sāyaṇācārya, translations of the *Bhāg. Pu. Viṣ. Pu.* Mbh and Martin Haug, the translator of the *Ait. Br* understand the meaning of the word *pariveṣṭr* in the sense of *pariveṣaṇa*, which means serving food. But, Eggeling in the translation of the *Śat. Br* understands this word as guardian.

Vedic Marut-s are warring gods and assist Indra in his exploits. Their participation in the Rājasūya and aśvamedha sacrifices as attendants serving food is not appropriate to their characteristics.

In the Purāṇa-s, amongst the hosts of Marut-s, Vāyu is the only one, who has attained fame The other Marut-s are distributed, one in the world of Indra, one with Brahma and four in the directions as followers of Indra. So, their nature agrees with the Vedic Maruts.

Therefore, Marut-s must have been present in the sacrifice of king Marutta, as guardians of the sacrifice.

But, the given verse is recited in the *Mantrapuṣpāñjali*, with the traditional meaning, that Marut-s arrived in the sacrifice of Marutta as

16. *Śat. Br.* : IV. 5.2.16.

अहुतादो वै देवानां मरुतः ।

17. *Maitrāyaṇī Samhitā* : I. 10.6.

Taittirīya Samhitā : IX. 5. 72. विन् मरुतः ।

Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra : I आघोषिन्यः प्रतिघोषिन्यः सङ्घोषिन्यः

IV. 19.8. विचिन्वत्यः स्वसनाः क्रव्यादः ।

attendants serving food. Generally, any *pūjā* is followed by *naivedya* offerings to the gods. *Naivedya* is followed by a meal in the form of *prasāda*. The verse is recited with a hidden wish, that may the Marut-s arrive in the abode of the worshipper as attendants serving food; there by the worshipper attains greatness of king Marutta.

Moreover, if the meaning 'guardian' be accepted the verse can be interpreted as follows :

During feasts we decorate the place by drawing rangoli-s around food-plates and also do *citṛāvati*. The purpose behind doing so is to ward off evil spirits. In the same way, the army of Marut-s encircles the *pūja*, its *naivedya* and the feast following the *pūjā* as guardians keeping evil forces at bay. Hence this verse can be considered to be an integral part of the *Mantrapuṣpāñjali*.

Another point to be elaborated upon is the place of king Marutta as one among the leading monarchs of the Vedic as well as the Epic and the Puranic ages.

From the given observations how can we estimate Marutta as a king?

- ❖ Marutta is hardly associated with an benevolent rule or with exploits like vanquishing foes and extending the boundaries of his kingdom. But he is looked upon as an ideal king upon whose footsteps other kings should tread. One among the essential postulates laid down for a king is *yajana* i.e. performing sacrifices¹⁸
- ❖ The entire character of king Marutta is associated with this postulate. This association with politico-religious sacrifices like Rājaśūya and Aśvamedha provide testimony to the hidden truth that he was a supreme king. It is to be noted that only sovereign kings were entitled to perform these great sacrifices¹⁹.
- ❖ Though the texts are not much eloquent about the exploits of Marutta as a king as well as the regime of Marutta, the epithets attained by him stand for his excellence in monarchy, unparallel leadership and benevolence.

18. *Mbh* : Śānti. P.60.13.

क्षत्रियस्यापि यो धर्मस्तं ते वक्ष्यामि भारत ।

दद्याद्राजा न याचेत यजेत न तु याजयेत् ॥

Anuśāsana P. 74.20

क्षत्रियोऽध्ययने युक्तो यजने दानकर्मणि ।

युद्धे यश्च परित्राता सोऽपि स्वर्गे महीयते ॥

Kautiliya Arthaśāstra : I. 3.6

क्षत्रियस्याध्ययनं यजनं दानं शस्त्राजीवो भूतरक्षणं च ॥

19. *Āpastamba Srauta Sūtra* : XX. 1.1

राजा सार्वभौमोऽश्वमेधेन यजेत ।

Aitareya Brāhmaṇa : VIII.5.

सूयते ह वा अस्य क्षत्रं यो दीक्षते क्षत्रियः सन् ।

Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa :

राजा स्वाराज्यकागो राजसूयेन यजेत ।

Hence, one is tempted to conclude that, the great importance given to sacrificial rituals has veiled the kingly qualities of this king.

Marutta enjoyed a place in the encyclopedic epic like the *Mbh* in a two-fold manner viz, as a king performing sacrifices and as a king advising to revolt even against his preceptor if he acts adversely to the kingdom and his constituents. His name is carried forward by religious texts like the *Purāṇa-s* as king performing sacrifices, but texts on polity like the *Kauṭīliya Arthaśāstra*, the *Kāmandakīya Nītisāra* and the *Sūkrānti* maintain silence about him²⁰.

The religious aspect in the personality of king Marutta stood the test of time, but due to the overemphasis on ritual, the 'political character' of this king has been forgotten.

20. *Kauṭīliya Arthaśāstra* : I.6.12. शत्रुषड्वर्गमुत्सृज्य जामदग्न्यो जितेन्द्रियः ।

अम्बरीषश्च नाभागो बुभुजाते चिरं महीम् ॥

Kāmandakīya Nītisāra : I.58-60. दाण्डक्यो नृपतिः कामात् क्रोधाच्च जनमेजयः ।

लोभादैलस्तु राजर्षिर्वातापिर्हर्षतोऽसुरः ॥

पौलस्त्यो राक्षसो मानान्मदाद दम्भोद्भवो नृपः ।

प्रयाता निधनं ह्येते शत्रुषड्वर्गमाश्रिताः ॥

शत्रुषड्वर्गमुत्सृज्य जामदग्न्यो जितेन्द्रियः ।

अम्बरीषश्च नाभागो बुभुजाते चिरं महीम् ॥

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MAÑKI GITĀ OF THE MAHĀBHĀRATA—A STUDY

By

S. JENA

[महाभारते श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतातिरिक्तं वहव्यो गीता वर्णिताः सन्ति । आसु गीतासु एका गीता 'मङ्किगीता' नाम्ना प्रथिताऽस्ति (महा. १२.३.१७१) । मङ्किना बहुप्रयासानन्तरमपि नासादितं वित्तम् अतोऽन्ते तस्य निर्वेदो जातः । निर्वेदस्य महत्त्वं दर्शयितुं शुकदेवस्य जनकस्यापि चरित्यमत्र निर्दिष्टम् । समासरूपेण कामानां त्याग एव श्रेयस्कर इति प्रतिपादितम् । अस्मिन् निबन्धे लेखकेन एतेषां समेषानां सम्यक् विवेचनं कृतम् ।]

Though the Chapters 23-40 of the Bhīṣma-parvan of the *Mahābhārata* constitute the famous *Bhagavad-Gītā*, still there are many other Gītās found in the other parvans of the great Epic. The *Śānti-parvan* alone contains eight different Gītās, whereas the *Āśvamedhika-parvan* contains the longest *Anu-Gītā* consisting of 35 Chapters. In the *Āśvamedhika-parvan*, we notice that Arjuna forgets the knowledge of famous *Bhagavad-Gītā* and entreats Śrī Kṛṣṇa to narrate the Gītā again. In conformity with his request Lord Kṛṣṇa describes it once again and as such the *Anu-Gītā* is the Longest Gītā found out in the *Māhābhārata* text.

The eight Gītās found in the *Śānti-parvan* of the *Mahābhārata* namely are — *Utathya Gītā* (XII. 1. Chs. 91-92), *Vāmadeva-Gītā* (XII. 1. Chs. 93-95), *Saṁyāka-Gītā* (XII. 3. Ch. 170), *Mañki-Gītā* (XII. 3. 171), *Vicakṣnu-Gītā* (XII. 3. Ch. 257), *Harita-Gītā* (XII. 3. 269), *Vṛtra-Gītā* (XII. 3.270-271) and *Parāśara-Gītā* (XII. 3. Chs. 279-287). Except *Parāśara-Gītā*, which is an extensive one, all other Gītās of this parvan are small ones consisting of 1 to 3 Chapters and they, instead of dealing with bare general truths, depict their themes by way of glaring concrete examples.

In this paper we are concerned with the *Mañki-Gītā*. The theme of *Mañki-Gītā* centres round the episode of sage Mañki. The sage Mañki laboured much for the acquisition of wealth, but fate always stood in his way. Lastly with the remains of his property, he purchased a pair of young bullocks (दम्यगोयुग्म्- 5) in order to build his fortune. One day the two bullocks tied to the yoke, were taken out to the field for training

them to agricultural labour (दमनाय). But very strangely at the sight of a camel on the road, they ran towards it and fell upon its neck. Enraged at finding them fall upon it, the camel suddenly rose up and ran at a great speed. Bearing the two helpless creatures on either side of its neck, the camel ran in an uneven course and the two bulls ultimately met their death. The sage Mañki was greatly astonished to see the role of destiny in human life. He came to the conclusion: If somebody is not destined, he cannot achieve his desires however skillful or competent he may be. Destiny is always at the root of one's success or prosperity. None can overcome the power of destiny. So a person desirous of getting peace and happiness should give up all attachment (तस्मान्निर्वेद एवेह गन्तव्यः सुखमीप्सता-14^b). No more running after any desire of wealth, a man of non-attachment (निर्विण्णो) attains peace and bliss.

Though the story of Mañki ends here, it is followed by the episode of Śuka, the son of Vyāsa. The *Mahābhārata* substantiates the teachings of Mañki by narrating the story of Śukadeva. As we know, Śukadeva was completely averse to worldly pleasures. Sense of detachment was so strong in him that without entering into householder's life, he decided to take up *sannyāsa* from his early life. Renouncing everything, from his father's abode he directly proceeded to the forest. In the opinion of Śukadeva, "he who renounces all, is superior to the person whose desires are fulfilled" (यः कामान् प्राप्नुयात्सर्वान् यश्चैतान् केवलांस्त्यजेत् । प्रापणात्सर्वकामानां परित्यागो विशिष्यते— Ch. 171.16)

In order to support this doctrine of renunciation the *Mahābhāratakāra* adds— "the effort for acquiring wealth is not full of happiness, it is very uncertain whether one's effort would lead to the fulfilment of desires and acquisition of wealth. If acquired, the acquirer is not free from worries. After the acquisition, if the wealth is lost, one feels like meeting death." Like the sweet water of the Ganges, wealth only increases one's hankerings. One is never satisfied even after acquiring a good deal of wealth, Hence giving up all desires and cultivating a sense of non-attachment or renunciation leads to happiness and bliss. Thus the doctrine of renunciation as propounded by Śukadeva is referred to here for corroborating the teaching of Mañki.

Here we may also point out that the episode of Śukadeva seems to be an interpolation in the *Mañki-Gītā* under discussion. Śukadeva happens to be the son of Vyāsa. If Vyāsa is the real author of the *Mahābhārata*, it

is incongruous to suppose that he would quote a saying of his son Śukadeva Gosvāmin. Thus there is no doubt that many of the passages of the *Śānti-parvan* are later additions.

In favour of the doctrine of renunciation the author of the Mahābhārat again refers to the episode of Janaka, the king of Videha. Though Sitā's father Janaka is very popular in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, his actual name was Śīradhvaja Janaka. Truly speaking, in the past many Janakas came and ruled over Mithilā. In the *Śānti-parvan* the *Mahābhārata* mentions the name of some Janakas like Janadeva Janaka (Ch. 211.3), Vasumāna Janaka (Ch. 297.2), Karāla Janaka (Ch. 291.7, 10), Daivarāti Janaka (Ch. 298.4) and so on. These Janakas are saints as well as ideal rulers. Connected with state affairs, they all embraced asceticism in their life. Therefore, though deeply involved in the affairs of their kingdom, they were indifferent to worldly objects and pleasures. Rightly termed as *rājarsis*, they really combined in themselves both enjoyment and restraint; *gārhasthya* and *saṁnyāsa* at the same time. Even though our text does not give the real name of king Janaka here, still his statement —

“अनन्तं बत मे वित्तं यस्य मे नास्ति किञ्चन ।

मिथिलायां प्रदीप्तायां न मे दहति किञ्चन ॥”

Ch. 171.56

clearly shows that with unlimited wealth and a vast prosperous kingdom like Mithilā, the King remains unattached to every thing. He does not lose the calmness of his mind and is never perturbed if the whole of Mithilā is consumed by fire. Look at his non-attachment ! Look at the dispassionate feeling! what a *karmayogin* this Janaka was ! The concept of renunciation as practised by king Janaka is different from that of Śukadeva, the son of Vyāsa. Out of sheer detachment from early childhood Śukadeva renounces *samsāra* and goes to the forest, but living within the *saṁsāra*, bound by the fetters of *karma*, Janaka develops in him the sense of non-attachment and the tranquility of mind.

In order to emphasise upon the non-attachment (निर्वेद) and the tranquility of mind (शम, शन्ति)¹, the *Mahābhārata* still refers to another

1. In this Chapter the redactor of the text has frequently used three words- *nirveda* (śloka 2, 14,40,45,53,57,58), *parityāga* (śloka 16, 42,46,48,53) and *sama/śānti* (śloka 45,50,55,58,59). *Nirveda* i.e. non-attachment or complete indifference to worldly objects leads to *parityāga* or renunciation. The latter, in turn, leads to *sama/śānti* or tranquility of mind.

story of sage Bodhya (Verses 57-61). King Nahuṣa asks Bodhya as to how the sage attains peace of mind through *nirveda* (निर्वेदाच्छान्ति-मापनं.....58^b.) In course of narrating the secret of his success Bodhya replies that he conducts his life according to the advice of the six preceptors² he has accepted. They are :- Piṅgalā³, *Kurara* (the osprey), *Sarpa* (the snake), *Sāraṅga* (the bee); *Iṣukāra* (the maker of shafts) and *Kumārī* (the maiden).

Thus we notice that in the *Mañki-Gītā* three episodes are interwoven together in order to bring home to the reader the doctrine of renunciation (परित्याग). Śukadeva, king Janaka and the sage Bodhya are living examples of nonattachment and tranquility of soul. By citing their examples the author of the *Mahābhārata* establishes the doctrine of renunciation as the sole cause of peace, happiness and bliss. Frustrated in his attempt to acquire wealth Mañki arrives at the same conclusion. After

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2. Though the instruction of the six preceptors does not appear in the Critical Edition of the *Mahābhārata*, in the footnote at the end of this Chapter [Śāntiparvan Part - III A (Mokṣadharmā.p. 981) Belvalkar, as culled from Vidyāsāgara's *Vyākhyāna-ratnāvalī* commentary, refers to the specific instruction that the sage Bodhya receives from each of his preceptors. From Piṅgalā reducing hope to an absence of expectation, he learns freedom from hope (पिङ्गला नाम नैराश्येन गुरुः) From a certain osprey totally abstaining from meat he learns how to abstain from food and be happy (कुररः आमिषत्यागेन गुरुः). Constructing a house is very painful. So, like a snake without its residence, the sage has neither home nor hearth (अनिकेतनत्वेन सर्पः). Like bees collecting honey from flower to flower in the forest, the sage is keen on gathering and assimilating quintessence from all the scriptures (सारं प्रति गच्छन्तीति सारङ्गाः; तेषां प्रतिपुष्पं मकरन्दान्वेषणे सर्वशास्त्रेभ्यः सारग्रहे गुरुः) From a certain maker of shafts he learns single-minded devotion to his work (इषुकारः चित्तैकाग्रये. From the anklet of the maiden, the sage learns loneliness and prefers to wander about the world alone (कुमारी..... मम एकाकितायां गुरुः).

This story of six preceptors is so popular that it has been elaborated in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa* XI. Chs. 8-9. The latter has even borrowed some lines verbatim from the *Mahābhārata* text.

3. Piṅgalā was a courtesan. The *Mahābhārata* XII. 168.46-52 refers to the story of Piṅgalā who, once disappointed to meet her paramour at the rendezvous, could not sleep peacefully. At this hour of frustration spiritual knowledge dawned upon her and she ultimately found solace in freedom from desire. In the language of the great Epic - नैराश्यं परमं सुखम् / आशामनाशां कृत्वा हि सुखं स्वपिति पिङ्गला- 52. This story has been extensively treated in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* XI. Ch.8 where the redactor also concludes- आशा हि परमं दुःखं यथा संछिद्य कान्ताशां सुखं सुष्वाप पिङ्गला- 8.44.

witnessing the loss of his two bulls, he cuts the very roots of desire and attains to immortality in the end. In the language of the Mahābhārata—

एतां बुद्धि समास्थाय मङ्गिनिर्वेदमागतः ।
 सर्वान् कामान्परित्यज्य प्राप्य ब्रह्म महत्सुखम् ॥
 दम्यनाशकृते मङ्गिरमरत्वं किलागमत् ।
 अच्छिनत् काममूलं स तेन प्राप महत्सुखम् ॥

Ch. 171.53-54

In the *Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā*, when bare abstract truths are dealt with so as to be practised by the individuals, in the *Mañki-Gītā* they are depicted with concrete examples inspiring people to cultivate them in their life.

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दुर्गासप्तशती वेदश्च

अमरनाथपाण्डेयः

[The Durgā saptaśatī belongs to the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa. Here the article discusses the Durgāsaptaśatī vis-a-vis the Veda. The Tantra incorporates the concept and the linguistic peculiarities of the Veda in an enchanting manner. The development of the philosophical and cultural processes from the time of the Vedas to the time of the Purāṇas may be viewed in the Saptaśatī. The article deals with the connected issue and the secret pertaining to the Saptaśatī tantra.]

दुर्गासप्तशती मार्कण्डेयपुराणान्तर्गता । सा विशिष्टं तन्त्रमिति न तिरोहितं विदुषाम् । ऋग्वेदे वाक्सूक्ते (१०/१२५) अम्मृणस्य महर्षेर्दुहिता वाङ्नाम्नी ब्रह्मविदुषी स्वात्मान-मस्तौत् । सा चित्सुखात्मकेन सर्वगतेन परमात्मना तादात्म्यमनुभवन्ती सर्वजगद्रूपेण सर्वाधिष्ठानरूपेण चाहमेव सर्वं भवामीति स्फुटमुद्घोषयति । सूक्तगता मन्त्रा अद्वैतस्य प्रतिपादनं निर्मलया गिरोपस्थापयन्ति —

“अहं रुद्रेभिर्वसुभिश्चराम्यहमादित्यैरुत विश्वदेवैः ।

अहं मित्रावरुणोभा बिभर्म्यहमिन्द्राग्नी अहमश्विनोभा ॥”

—ऋग्वेदः १०/१२५/१

कृष्णयजुर्वेदे “कात्यायनाय विद्महे कन्याकुमारि धीमहि । तन्नो दुर्गिः प्रचोदयात् ।” (आ. १०/१) इत्युपलभ्यते । तथा चाथर्ववेदे (१२/४/८३) “दुर्गा तस्मा अधिष्ठाने पृथिवी सह देवता” इति प्राप्यते । केनोपनिषदि (२/१२) चोमा हैमवतीति कथ्यते—‘स तस्मिन्नेवाकाशे स्त्रियमाजगाम बहुशोभमानामुमां हैमवतीं तां होवाच किमेतदक्षर-मिति ।” “सा ब्रह्मेति होवाच । ब्रह्मणो वा एतद्विजये महीध्वमिति, ततो हैव विदाञ्चकार ब्रह्मेति ।”

दुर्गा महाशक्तिर्ब्रह्मविद्यैव । वेदे बीजरूपेण विद्यमानं दुर्गास्वरूपं दुर्गासप्तशत्यां साधून्मीलितम् । तथा च सप्तशत्याम्—

(१) “त्वं स्वाहा त्वं स्वधा त्वं हि वषट्कारः वरात्मिका ।”

“सुधा त्वमक्षरे नित्ये त्रिधा मात्रात्मिका स्थिता ।”

—१/७२-७३

(२) “शब्दात्मिका सुविमलर्ग्यजुषां निधानमुद्गीथरम्यपदपाठवतां च साम्नाम् ।
देवी त्रयी भगवती भवभावनाय वार्तासि सर्वजगतां परमार्तिहन्त्री ॥”

—४/१०

वेदस्तु शब्द एव, अतो भगवती शब्दात्मिकोच्यते । अतो भगवती वेदरूपा ।

दुर्गासप्तशत्यां चरित्रत्रयस्योपाख्यानमुपलभ्यते । प्रथमचरित्रस्य महाकाली देवता ऋग्वेदः स्वरूपम्, द्वितीयचरित्रस्य महालक्ष्मीर्देवता यजुर्वेदः स्वरूपम्, तृतीयचरित्रस्य च महासरस्वती देवता सामवेदः स्वरूपम् ।

प्रथमचरित्रमुपन्यस्यते । सुमेधा नाम मुनिः, सुरथो नाम राजा, समाधिर्नाम वैश्यश्च । राजा वैश्यश्चात्यन्तदुःखितौ मोहग्रस्तौ मुनिं समुपस्थितौ —

“एवमेष तथाहञ्च द्वावप्यत्यन्तदुःखितौ ॥

दृष्टदोषेऽपि विषये ममत्वाकृष्टमानसौ ।

तत् किमेतन्महाभाग यन्मोहो ज्ञानिनोरपि ॥

ममास्य च भवत्येषा विवेकान्धस्य मूढता ॥” (१/४३-४५)

इति तयोः प्रश्नः । तदा ऋषिर्भगवत्या महामायायाः स्वरूपं निर्दिशति । महामाया भगवती ज्ञानिनामपि चेतांसि मोहयति । यदा विष्णुकर्णमलोद्भूतौ मधुकैटभौ ब्रह्माणां हन्तुमुद्यतौ, तदा ब्रह्मा योगनिद्रां तुष्टाव । निद्रया देव्या मुक्तो जनार्दन उत्तस्थौ मधुकैटभौ ददर्श । भगवता विष्णुना तौ हताविति प्रथमाध्यायस्य वस्तु । अत्र मोहो ममत्वं बोधः प्रबोध इत्यादिशब्दाः प्रयुक्ताः सन्ति । ऋग्वेदो ज्ञानस्य प्रतिपादनं करोति । अस्यालोके यदा प्रथमचरित्रं विभाव्यते, तदा वेदनिगूढं रहस्यमत्र तन्त्रे प्रकाशितं भवति । “सा विद्या परमा मुक्तेर्हेतुभूता सनातनी ॥ संसारबन्धहेतुश्च सैव सर्वेश्वरेश्वरी ॥” (दुर्गासप्तशती १/५७-५८), “यच्च किञ्चित् क्वचिद् वस्तु सदसद्वाखिलात्मिके ॥ तस्य सर्वस्य या शक्तिः सा त्वं किं स्तूयसे तदा ॥” (तत्रैव १/८२-८३) इत्यादिसन्दर्भा भगवती ज्ञानस्वरूपेति स्पष्टमुदीरयन्ति । प्रथमाध्याये ब्रह्मणा कृता स्तुतिर्निबद्धा विद्यते ।

मध्यमचरित्रस्य यजुर्वेदः स्वरूपमिति विनियोगः । यजुर्वेदे कर्मणो निरूपणम् । महिषासुरेण पराजिता देवा ब्रह्माणं पुरस्कृत्य शङ्करं विष्णुञ्चोपेतौ । समवेताः सर्वे देवाः क्रोधं चक्रुः । शक्रादीनां शरीरतो महत्तेजो निश्चक्राम । तच्चैक्यं समपद्यत । ततेजः

स्त्रीरूपमभूदिति भावः । समस्तदेवतेजोराशिसमुद्भवां तां विलोक्य देवाः प्रीतिं प्रापुः । देवा देव्यै स्वानि स्वान्यायुधानि ददुः । देव्या महिषासुरस्य च युद्धं प्रवृत्तम् । देवी महिषासुरं जघान । महिषासुरवधेन प्रसन्ना देवा देवीं तुष्टुवुः —

“शक्रादयः सुरगणा निहतेऽतिवीर्ये तस्मिन् दुरात्मनि सुरारिबले च देव्या ।

तां तुष्टुवुः प्रणतिनम्रशिरोधरांसा वाग्भिः प्रहर्षपुलकोद्गमचारुदेहाः ॥” (४/२)

इति । इयं स्तुतिः शक्रादिस्तुतिरित्युच्यते । महालक्ष्म्याश्चरितमिदम् ।

उत्तरचरित्रस्य सामवेदः स्वरूपम् । सामवेदस्य विषय उपासना । उत्तरचरित्रं पञ्चमाध्यायादारभ्यते, त्रयोदशाध्यायं यावत् प्रवर्तते । चरित्रेऽत्र शुम्भनिशुम्भादीनां वधो वर्णितोऽस्ति । अत्र तु स्तुतिद्वयमुपनिबद्धं विद्यते—प्रथमा पञ्चमाध्याये द्वितीया चैकादशाध्याये ।

दुर्गासप्तशतीतन्त्रं त्रयीमनुसरति । यथा त्रयो वेदास्तथैव त्रीणि चरित्राणि । प्रत्येकं चरित्रं वेदमुपवर्णयति । प्रथमाध्याये महाकाल्याः स्वरूपं वर्णितमस्ति, द्वितीयतृतीयचतुर्थाध्यायेषु महालक्ष्म्याः स्वरूपम् । अवशिष्टेषु नवाध्यायेषु महासरस्वत्याः स्वरूपं निबद्धमस्ति । अत्र योजनाविषयेऽवधानं देयम् ।

प्रथमं चरित्रमेकमध्यायं व्याप्नोति, द्वितीयञ्च त्रिगुणितमर्थात् अध्यायत्रयं व्याप्नोति, तृतीयञ्च नवाध्यायं व्याप्नोति । यदा प्रथमं चरित्रं त्रिगुणितं भवति, तदा त्रिसङ्ख्योपलभ्यते । यदा च द्वितीयं चरित्रं त्रिगुणितं भवति, तदा नवसङ्ख्योपलभ्यते । एवं सङ्कलितास्त्रोदशाध्याया भवन्ति — $१ + ३ + ९ = १३$ । प्रथमाध्यायादारम्य त्रयोदशाध्यायपर्यन्तं यदा सर्वेऽध्यायाः सङ्कलिता भवन्ति, तदा एकनवतिः (११) सङ्ख्योपलभ्यते । अत्रापि सङ्ख्ययोर्विशेषः । दुर्गासप्तशत्यां त्रयोदशाध्यायाः सन्ति । अत्रैकेन देवी वस्तुत एकैवेति सूच्यते । यद्यपि महाकालीमहालक्ष्मीमहासरस्वत्य इति देव्यास्त्रीणि रूपाणि ख्यातानि सन्ति, किन्त्वेतानि देव्याश्चण्डिकाया विलसितान्येवेति वस्तुतस्तस्या एकैव मूर्तिः । विभागरूपेण वेदास्त्रयः किन्तु पर्यवसाने त्वेक एव । विभिन्नेषु रूपेष्वेकैव देवी प्रकाशते । वेदेनाप्युद्घुष्टम् — “एकं सद् विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति ।”

साधनायां त्रिकोणस्य विशिष्टं महत्त्वं विद्यते । विन्ध्याचले त्रिकोण उपलभ्यते । एतादृशस्त्रिकोणो भारते कुत्रापि नोपलभ्यते ।

वेदे पूर्वमिन्द्रस्य महत्त्वमासीत् । अनन्तरमिन्द्रस्य स्थाने विष्णोः प्रतिष्ठा जाता । एवं कालान्तरे देव्याः प्रतिष्ठा भवति—इन्द्रादयः सुरगणास्तां तुष्टुवुः, दुर्गासप्तशती वेदे प्रतिष्ठितस्येन्द्रस्य महत्त्वमेवं प्रकटीकरोति—

- (१) 'जित्वा च सकलान् देवानिन्द्रोऽभून्महिषासुरः ।' — २/३
 (२) 'शक्रादयः सुरगणा निहतेऽतिवीर्ये तस्मिन् दुरात्मनि सुरारिबिले च देव्या ।' — ४/२
 (३) 'इन्द्राद्याः सकला देवास्तस्थुर्येषां न संयुगे ।' — ५/१२५
 (४) 'त्रैलोक्यमिन्द्रो लभतां देवाः सन्तु हविर्भुजः ।' — ८/२६

यथेन्द्रो वृत्रासुरं हन्तुं साहाय्यमुपलब्धवान्, तथैव देव्यपि । इन्द्रस्य साहाय्यं कथं कृतमिति वेदे प्रकटीकृतम्—

- (१) अनु यदीं मरुतो मंदसानमार्चन्निन्द्रं पपिवांसं सुतस्य ।
 आदत्त वज्रमभि यदहिं हन्नपो यह्वीरसृजत्सर्तवा उ ॥
 - ऋग्वेदः ५।२९।२

यदा मरुतः पीतवन्तमिन्द्रमन्वाचन् अन्वस्तुवन् तदेन्द्रो वज्रमाददौ ।

- (२) "दिवो न तुभ्यमन्विन्द्र सत्रासुर्यं देवेभिर्धायि विश्वम् ।
 अहिं यद् वृत्रमपो वत्रिवांसं हन्तृजीषिन् विष्णुना सचानः ॥"
 - ऋग्वेदः ६।२०।२

- (३) "इन्द्रं वृत्राय हन्तवे देवासो दधिरे पुरः ।
 इन्द्रं वाणीरनूषता समोजसे ॥" — तत्रैव ८।१२।२२
 दुर्गासप्तशत्यां यास्कस्य निर्वचनप्रक्रियायाः प्रभावोऽपि स्फुटं परिलक्ष्यते—

- (१) "यस्माच्चण्डं च मुण्डं च गृहीत्वा त्वमुपागता ।
 चामुण्डेति ततो लोके ख्याता देवि भविष्यसि ॥" — ७/२७
 (२) "यतो नियुक्तो दौत्येन तया देव्या शिवः स्वयम् ।
 शिवदूतीति लोकेऽस्मिंस्ततः सा ख्यातिमागता ॥" — ८/२८
 (३) "भक्षयन्त्याश्च तानुग्रान् वैप्रचित्तान् महासुरान् ।
 रवंता दन्ता भविष्यन्ति दाडिमीकुसुमोपमाः ॥
 ततो मां देवताः स्वर्गे मर्त्यलोके च मानवाः ।
 स्तुवन्तो व्याहरिष्यन्ति सततं रक्तदन्तिकाम् ॥" — ११/४४-४५
 (४) "ततः शतेन नेत्राणां निरीक्षिष्यामि यन्मुनीन् ।
 कीर्तयिष्यन्ति मनुजाः शताक्षीमिति मां ततः ॥" — ११/४७

- (५) “ततोऽहमखिलं लोकमात्मदेहसमुद्भवैः ।
भरिष्यामि सुराः शाकैरावृष्टेः प्राणधारकैः ॥
शाकम्भरीति विख्यातिं तदा यास्याम्यहं भुवि ।” — ११/४८-४९
- (६) “तत्रैव च वधिष्यामि दुर्गमाख्यं महासुरम् ॥
दुर्गा देवीति विख्यातं तन्मे नाम भविष्यति ।” — ११/४९-५०
- (७) “पुनश्चाहं यदा भीमं रूपं कृत्वा हिमाचले ॥
रक्षांसि भक्षयिष्यामि मुनीनां त्राणकारणात् ।
तदा मां मुनयः सर्वे स्तोष्यन्त्यानप्रमूर्तयः ॥
भीमा देवीति विख्यातं तन्मे नाम भविष्यति ॥” — ११/५०-५२
- (८) “यदारुणाख्यस्त्रैलोक्ये महाबाधां करिष्यति ॥
तदाहं भ्रामरं रूपं कृत्वाऽसङ्ख्येयषट्पदम्
त्रैलोक्यस्य हितार्थाय वधिष्यामि महासुरम् ॥
भ्रामरीति च मां लोकास्तदा स्तोष्यन्ति सर्वतः ।” — ११/५२-५४

दुर्गासप्तशत्याः प्रयोगेष्वपि वेदभाषायाः प्रभावः प्रकटीभवति—

- (१) “निनादैर्भीषणैः काली जिग्ये विस्तारितानना ।” — ८।१०
जिधातोः परस्मैपदं विद्यते, अत्र तु प्रयोग आत्मनेपदम् ।

अत्र पाणिनिसूत्रं ‘व्यत्ययो बहुलम्’ (३।१।८५) प्रवर्तते । विकरणानां बहुलं व्यत्ययः स्याच्छन्दसि । ‘व्यत्ययो बहुलम्’ इति सूत्रानुसारेणान्यत्रापि प्रयोगा उपलभ्यन्ते—

- (२) ‘संस्मृता संस्मृता त्वं नो हिंसेथाः परमापदः ।’ — ४।३६
‘हिंसीथाः’ (परस्मैपदम्) इत्यस्य स्थाने ‘हिंसेथाः’ (आत्मनेपदम्) इति प्रयोगः ।
- (३) “तस्य वितर्द्धिविभवैर्धनदारादिसम्पदाम् ।
वृद्धयेऽस्मत्प्रसन्ना त्वं भवेथाः सर्वदाम्बिके ॥” — ४/३७

वेदकालादारभ्य देवतोद्भवविकासक्रमपरीक्षणो नैव देव्याः स्वरूपमधिगन्तुं शक्यते । यदि वेदरहस्यं न साक्षात्क्रियते, तदा दुर्गासप्तशतीतन्त्रस्वरूपं दुर्गासप्तशतीभाषास्वरूपञ्चापि न साक्षात्क्रियते । देव्याः स्वरूपे सर्वेषां देवानां स्वरूपमन्तर्गतं विद्यते इति

दुर्गासप्तशतीपरिशीलनेन विस्फोर्यते । वैदिकदेवेष्वधिष्ठातृदेवता विद्यते । तादृशी देवतैव शक्तिः । वेदेषु स्थिताया अधिष्ठातृदेवताया नवावतारो दुर्गेति प्रकाशयितुं शक्यते ।

अनेकानि वेदविरुद्धानि तन्त्राणि सन्ति । यद्यपि कथञ्चित् सर्वेषां तन्त्राणां वेदप्रभवत्वं निर्दिश्यते, किन्त्वनासक्तसमीक्षया नैतत् सङ्गतम् । क्वचित् तन्त्रनिर्देशानुसारेण कृतमनुष्ठानं न समीहितं साधयति । अनभीष्टमपि तत्र तत्रोपहरति । अनुष्ठानजनिता विकृतिरपि लोके विलोक्यते । अनुसन्धानदृशा पर्यालोचितं तादृशं तन्त्रं वेदविरुद्धमित्यनाविलमाविष्क्रियते । वर्तमानकालेऽप्यनेके सत्पुरुषास्तन्त्रानुसारेणानुष्ठानमाचरितवन्त एश्वर्यं प्रतिष्ठाञ्चाधिगतवन्तः किन्तु शरीरक्लेशसन्तप्ता रोगग्रस्ताश्च दृष्टाः । अतः सिद्ध्यति वेदविरुद्धतन्त्रानुष्ठानं नाभीष्टफलदमिति । पक्षान्तरे दुर्गातन्त्रानुष्ठानपरीक्षापि प्रसक्ता भवति । दुर्गासप्तशत्यामेव प्रतिपादितं वेदानुसारि तन्त्रस्य स्वरूपम् । अनुष्ठानमपि सदाऽनुकूलं फलमुपनयतीति तेषां तेषामनुष्ठानरतानां सत्पुरुषाणां जीवनाद् विभाव्यते । शङ्कराचार्यप्रभृतिभिराचार्यै-
र्वेदविरुद्धानि तन्त्राणि निन्दितानीति ।

“स्तुता सम्पूजिता पुष्पैर्धूपगन्धादिभिस्तथा ।

ददाति वित्तं पुत्रांश्च मतिं धर्मे गतिं शुभाम् ॥” (१२/४१)

इति चरित्रमाहात्म्यवर्णनेन तन्त्रस्य निष्कलुषं स्वरूपमुद्घुङ्कितं भवति । सुरथस्या-
स्खलितराज्यप्राप्तिर्वैश्यस्य समाधिनामधेयस्य च ज्ञानसंसिद्धिरिति विशदं सूचितम्—

“स्वल्पैरहोभिर्नृपते स्वं राज्यं प्राप्स्यते भवान् ॥

हत्वा रिपूनस्खलितं तव तत्र भविष्यति ॥” — १३/२०-२१

“वैश्यवर्य त्वया यश्च वरोऽस्मत्तोऽभिवाञ्छितः ॥

तं प्रयच्छामि संसिद्ध्यै तव ज्ञानं भविष्यति ॥” — १३/२४-२५

दुर्गासप्तशतीरचनाविधानात् तत्र तत्रोल्लेखाच्च त्रय्या एव रहस्यं क्रोडीकृतम् । सर्वथा त्रय्यामेव पर्यवस्यति तत्त्वमिति तस्या वेदसम्मतत्वम् । यथा वेद एकमेव परमं तत्त्वं प्रतिपादयति तथैव सप्तशतीतन्त्रमपि केवलमम्बिकारूपं तत्त्वं प्रतिपादयति—

“एकैवाहं जगत्पत्र द्वितीया का ममापरा ।

पश्यैता दुष्ट मय्येव विशन्त्यो मद्भिभूतयः ॥

ततः समस्तास्ता देव्यो ब्रह्माणीप्रमुखा लयम् ।

तस्या देव्यास्तनौ जग्मुरेकैवासीत्तदाम्बिका ॥” — १०/१५-६

एवं दुर्गासप्तशतीतन्त्रं वेदमनुगच्छति ।

सूतसंहिता

रमाकान्त झा

[The Skanda Purāṇa is enumerated as thirteenth Purāṇa in the eighteen Purāṇas. This Purāṇa consists of 81 thousand ślokas and is largest one among all the Purāṇas. Presently its two versions are available : one version is divided into seven khaṇḍas and is prevalent now a days in north India. Another version is divided into Saṁhitās. The version divided into Saṁhitās has six Saṁhitās. Here in this article the learned author after discussing the nature, importance and place of the Skanda Purāṇa has dealt with in detail the matter and importance of the Sūtasāṁhitā.]

उपक्रमः

अस्ति पुराणमार्यजातेः सर्वस्वम् । इदं हि संस्कृतवाङ्मयस्य भव्यप्रासादस्य विद्यते आधारस्तम्भः । वरीवर्ति पुराणसाहित्यं पुराणेतिहासमन्दिरस्य स्वर्णकलशः । भाषायाः सारल्येन क्रमबद्धशैल्या च प्राचीनं सदपि नूतनां स्फूर्तिं संचारयत् पुराणं स्वकीयं वैशिष्ट्यं धत्ते । भारतवर्षस्य सांस्कृतिको न्यासः पुराणेष्वेव सुरक्षितो वर्तते । अस्ति पुराणं सुरभारतीवाङ्मयस्य विशिष्टमङ्गम् ।

प्रतीकात्मकवैदिकतत्त्वस्य विस्तरः पौराणिकीं व्याख्यामपेक्षतेऽतः 'इतिहासपुराणाभ्यां वेदं समुपबृंहयेत्' इति भणितिरेव पुराणरचनाया बीजं प्रतिभाति । अनया दृशा वेदविद्याया एव लोकेऽवान्तररूपा विद्यते पुराणविद्या ! स्कन्दपुराणं वेदस्यात्मानं पुराणं स्फुटं स्वीकरोति—

“आत्मा पुराणं वेदानाम्” । अस्ति पुराणेषु वेदस्य प्रतिष्ठा निहिता । तथा हि—

“वेदवन्निश्चलं मन्ये पुराणार्थं द्विजोत्तमाः ।

वेदाः प्रतिष्ठिताः सर्वे पुराणे नात्र संशयः”¹ ॥

नारदपुराणे पुराणस्य सर्ववेदार्थसारत्वं सुव्यक्तमेव । तथा हि—

“सर्ववेदार्थसाराणि पुराणानीति भूपते”¹ ।

पुराणस्य पञ्चमवेदत्वमपि स्पष्टमुद्घुष्टम् । तथा हि—

पुराणं पञ्चमो वेद इति ब्रह्मानुशासनम् ।

यो न वेद पुराणं हि न स वेदात्र किञ्चन” ॥

छान्दोग्योपनिषदपि विद्यानां सूच्यामितिहासपुराणस्योल्लेखं पञ्चमवेदरूपेण करोति । तथा हि—“इतिहासपुराणं पञ्चमं वेदानां वेदम्” । इत्थं वेदोपनिषच्छायायामेव पुराणविद्याया आविष्कारः प्रतीयते । वस्तुतो धार्मिकपरम्परायां वेदोत्तरं पुराणमेव मान्यं वर्तते । अस्ति ‘सूतसंहिता’ लेखस्यास्य विवेच्यो विषयः । संहितेयं स्कन्दपुराणस्य संहितारूपो भागोऽतोऽत्र स्कन्दपुराणस्य संक्षिप्तचर्चा प्रासंगिकी एव ।

स्कन्दपुराणम्—

स्कन्दपुराणे स्वामिना कार्तिकेयेन शैवतत्वस्य निरूपणमकारि । अत एवास्य पुराणस्य नाम स्कन्दपुराणं प्रथितमस्ति । पुराणानां षड्कावस्य पुराणस्य वर्तते त्रयोदशं स्थानम् । सर्वेषु पुराणेषु विपुलं कायं विभर्ति पुराणमिदम् । अस्य श्लोकसंख्या विषयेऽस्ति मतद्वयम्— वर्तमानोपलब्धस्य खण्डात्मकस्य स्कन्दपुराणस्य श्लोकाः एकाशीति सहस्राणि निगद्यन्ते । परन्तु संहितात्मकस्य भागस्य श्लोकसंख्या लक्षपरिमिता कथ्यते । स्कन्दपुराणस्य षट्सु संहितासु द्वितीयया सूतसंहितया संहितात्मकस्य भागस्य श्लोकसंख्या लक्षैका स्वीक्रियते—

“लक्षं तु ग्रन्थसंख्याभिः सर्वज्ञानविशारदम् ।

स्कान्दमथाभिवक्ष्यामि पुराणं श्रुतिसम्मतम् ॥”²

सन्ति पुराणेऽस्मिन् संहिताः, खण्डा माहात्म्यानि च । सूतसंहितानुसारेण स्कन्दपुराणे षट् संहिताः तासु च पञ्चाशत् खण्डा वर्तन्ते³ । आसां षड्विधानां संहितानां विस्तृतो निर्देशो नारदपुराणे समुपलभ्यते । स्कन्दपुराणस्य विभाजनस्यैकोऽन्यः प्रकारो विद्यते खण्डेषु । इमे सप्त संख्याकाः खण्डाः सन्ति—माहेश्वर-वैष्णव-ब्रह्म-काशी-रेवा-तापी-प्रभासाः । प्रभासखण्डस्यान्तिमेऽध्यायेऽस्य सप्त खण्डाः सन्ति निर्दिष्टाः ।

संहिताः—

सूतसंहितायां षड्विधसंहितानां नामानि यथाक्रमं सन्ति निर्दिष्टानि तथा हि—

1. नारदपुराणम्, १/९/१००
2. सूतसंहिता, १/११/१८
3. षड्विधं संहिताभेदैः पञ्चाशत् खण्डमण्डितम् ।

“आद्या सनत्कुमारोक्ता द्वितीया सूतसंहिता ।
तृतीया शांकरी विप्राश्चतुर्थी वैष्णवी मता ।
तत्परा संहिता ब्राह्मी सौरीऽन्त्या संहिता मता”¹ ॥

- १— सनत्कुमारसंहिता—षट्सु संहितासु प्रथमायां सनत्कुमारसंहितायां सन्ति पञ्चाशत् सहस्राणि श्लोकाः । संहितायामस्यां विश्वेश्वरगुणानुकीर्तन-कश्यपवर्णन-मोक्षोपायनिरूपण-विश्वेश्वरलिङ्गाविर्भाव-काशीधर्म-व्यास-चरितादयो विषयाः सम्यक् वर्णिताः सन्ति । साम्प्रतं संहितेयं त्रयोविंशत्यध्यायानामेका लाघ्वाकारा समुपलभ्यते ।
 - २— सूतसंहिता-अस्याः संहिताया विद्यन्ते षट् सहस्राणि श्लोकाः । संहितासु इयं भजते द्वितीयं स्थानम् । संहितायामस्यां शैवदर्शनतत्त्वानि सम्यग्रूपेण वर्णितानि सन्ति । अस्त्यग्रेऽस्या विशदं विवेचनम् ।
 - ३— शङ्करसंहिता—अस्त्यनेकेषु खण्डेषु विभक्तेयं संहिता । अस्याः प्रथमः खण्डोऽस्ति शिवरहस्याभिधः । खण्डेऽस्मिन् त्रयोदश सहस्राणि श्लोकाः सन्ति । संहितायामस्यां सम्भव-आसुर-माहेन्द्र-युद्ध-देव-दक्ष-उपदेश-संज्ञकानि सन्ति सप्तकाण्डानि । अस्यां हि त्रिंशत् सहस्राणि श्लोका वर्तन्ते ।
 - ४— वैष्णवसंहिता—इयं हि चतुर्थी संहिता । अस्यां पञ्च सहस्राणि श्लोकाः सन्ति । साम्प्रति संहितेयं नोपलभ्यते ।
 - ५— ब्रह्मसंहिता-वर्तते इयं पञ्चमी संहिता । अस्यां त्रिसहस्राणि श्लोकाः सन्ति । इयमपि साम्प्रति नोपलभ्यते ।
 - ६— सौरसंहिता—अस्यां संहितायां शिवपूजनसम्बन्धिनोऽनेके विषयाः सन्ति वर्णिताः । अत्राष्टादशपुराणोपपुराणान्यपि कथितानि सन्ति । याज्ञवल्क्यकर्तृकं स्तोत्रमपि अत्र वर्णितमस्ति । चरमायामस्यां सहस्रं श्लोकाः सन्ति ।
- अष्टादशपुराणेषु बृहत्कार्यं स्कान्दं पुराणं सारमयं विद्यते । सारसंग्रहे मधुवृत्तिरेव श्रेयस्करी । स्कन्दपुराणे तीर्थवर्णनेन साकं माहात्म्योल्लेखनेन प्राक्तनकालिक-भूवृत्तान्तस्य महान् परिचय उपलभ्यते यो हि अस्माकं भारतीयानाममूल्यो निधिरस्ति ।

देशः— स्कन्दपुराणस्य प्रभासखण्डेऽस्ति समुल्लेखो यदस्य महापुराणस्य प्रथमं कथनं देवानां सन्निधौ भगवता शङ्करेण कैलासशिखरे कृतम् । तथा हि—

“पुरा कैलासशिखरे ब्रह्मादीनां च सन्निधौ ।

स्कान्दं पुराणं कथितं पार्वत्यग्रे पिनाकिना” ॥

भारतीया परम्परा पुराणानि व्यासकृतानीति मन्यते । अतएव स्कन्दपुराणस्य रचनादेशोऽपि व्यासष्य देश एव स्वीकार्यः । यत्रोपविश्य व्यासदेवेनास्य पुराणस्य विरचनमकारि तदेव स्थानमस्य देश इति सामान्यो नियमः । पुराणेऽस्मिन् तीर्थाधिक्यवर्णनात् कोऽपि तीर्थविशेषोऽस्य रचना देश इत्यपि न वक्तुं पार्यते । परन्तु तीर्थेष्वपि काशी-प्रयाग-प्रभास-क्षेत्राणां बृहद्वर्णनात् कस्मिन्नप्येकस्मिन् क्षेत्रे कथं विशेषाग्रहः ? पुराणस्यास्य प्रथमोपदेशः कैलासशिखरेऽभूदतस्तदेव स्थानमस्य निर्माणस्थलं कथं न मन्यते । किन्तु पुराणश्रणवस्य चर्चितस्थलं नैमिषाख्यमतस्तत् प्रति नेत्रनिमीलनमपि नोचितं प्रतिभाति । कस्मिन्नपि तीर्थविशेषे बद्धाग्रहेऽस्य बृहदाकार एव बाधको भवति । अस्य विपुल-कलेवरस्य स्कन्दपुराणस्य संशोधनपरिवर्धने कदा कुत्र कस्यां परिस्थितावभूतामित्यस्ति विशेषान्वेषणस्य विषयो यस्यैतिहासिकदृष्ट्याध्ययनमपेक्षितं विद्यते ।

कालः—स्कन्दपुराणस्य कालविषयेऽस्ति विदुषां नैकमतम् । विल्सन प्रभृतयः पाश्चात्या मनीषिणः स्कन्दपुराणस्य रचनाकालं त्रयोदशशताब्दीमामनन्ति । पुराणेऽस्मिन् जगन्नाथमन्दिरस्य वर्णनमेवास्ति उपर्युक्तकालनिर्णये विल्सनमहोदस्य आधारः । परन्तु डॉ. कृष्णमणित्रिपाठी त्रयोदशशताब्द्यां जगन्नाथमन्दिरस्य जीर्णोद्धारमूरीकरोति न तु मन्दिरस्य निर्माणम्¹ । समये-समये मन्दिराणां जीर्णोद्धारेण पुण्यलाभस्य संकेतः स्कन्दपुराणे प्राप्यते । तथा हि—

“काले भग्नमापन्नं जीर्णोद्धारं करोति यः ।

इह तस्य फलस्यान्तः प्रलयेऽपि न जायते”² ।

१३० ईस्वीये लिखिता काशी खण्डस्यैका प्रतिः विश्वकोश कार्यालयेऽस्ति सुरक्षिता । डॉ. हरप्रदासशास्त्रिणा नेपाल पुस्तकालये स्कन्दपुराणस्यैका पाण्डुलिपिः प्राप्ता या सप्तमशताब्द्याः शैल्यां लिखिता विद्यते³ । आचार्यो बलदेवोपाध्यायः स्कन्दपुराणस्य निर्माणकालं सप्तमनवमशताब्दयो स्वीकरोति⁴ । सी. वी. वैद्य महोदयः

1. डॉ. कृष्णमणि त्रिपाठी, पुराण पर्यालोचनम्, गवेषणात्मको भागः

चौखम्बा प्रकाशनम्, पृ. ३३६-३७

2. स्कन्दपुराणम्, काशीखण्डः, २१।११६

3. केटेलग आफ नेपाल पाम लीफ मैन्सु, पृ. ५२

4. पुराणविमर्शः, चौखम्बा विधा भवनम्, वाराणसी, पृ. ५६०

स्कन्दपुराणस्य रचनाकालमेकादश शताब्धाः पश्चान्नाङ्गीकरोति¹ । निष्कर्षतः स्कन्दपुराणस्य मूलरूपमिति प्राक्तनं सदपि तस्य साम्प्रतिकं विपुलाकाररूपं सप्तमशताब्द्या एकादशशतीकालिकं प्रतीयते ।

सूतसंहिता—

वेङ्कटेश्वरप्रेस मुम्बईतः प्रकाशितस्य स्कन्दपुराणस्य संस्कृतप्रस्तावनायामस्य सम्पादकः श्रीकृष्णदास एवं प्रतिपादयति—खण्डेषु विभक्तं स्कन्दपुराणमस्ति महापुराणम् संहितासु च विभक्तं पुराणमिदं विद्यत उपपुराणम् । तेनेत्थं निगद्यते—स्कान्दं नाम पुराणं तावद् द्विविधम्—एकं स्कन्दपुराणम्, द्वितीयं स्कान्दोपपुराणम् । तत्राष्टादशपुराणेषु त्रयोदशं स्कान्दं नाम महापुराणं परिगणितं तदेतदेव—यस्यैषा प्रस्तावनाऽधुना श्रीमद्भिः पर्यालोच्य कृतीर्थाक्रियते अथ च स्कान्दं नामान्यदप्येकं पुराणं षट्संहितात्मकं पञ्चाशत् खण्डमण्डितं लक्षग्रन्थसंख्योपनिबद्धं समुपलभ्यते तत्तु स्कान्दं नामोपपुराणमिति² । श्रीकृष्णदासेन गृहीतैरुद्धरणैः केवलमिदं सिध्यति यत् स्कान्दं नामैकमुपपुराणं विद्यते न तु संहितात्मको भाग उपपुराणमिति । उपपुराणसाहित्य पर्यालोचकस्य डॉ. आर. सी. हाजरा महाभागस्य मते तृतीयं स्कान्दमुपपुराणं केवलं नान्दोपपुराणस्यास्ति नामान्तरम्³ । हाजरामहानुभावो नान्दमेव तृतीयमुपपुराणमङ्गीकरोति न स्कान्दम् । सूतसंहिताया उपपुराणसूच्यां नान्दं तृतीयमुपपुराणं परिगणितं विद्यते—“द्वितीयं नारसिंहाख्यं तृतीयं नान्दमेव च⁴ ।” सूतसंहितानुसारेण संहिताः महापुराणेन सम्बद्धाः न तूपपुराणेन । सूतसंहिताशिवमाहात्म्यखण्डस्य प्रथमाध्याये स्कन्दपुराणस्य गणना पुराणसूच्यामेव करोति ।⁵ शङ्करसंहिता सुस्पष्टं घोषयति—

“तत्र स्कान्दं प्रवक्ष्यामि पुराणेषु त्रयोदशम् ।
संहिताभिस्तथा षड्भिलक्षैर्ग्रन्थैर्विराजितम् ॥ —शंकरसंहिता

1. हिस्ट्री ऑफ मेडिवल हिन्दू इण्डिया, द्वितीयो भागः, पृ. ४
2. स्कन्दपुराणस्य प्रस्तावना, पृ. ७-१२
3. स्टडीज इन दि उपपुराणाज, द्वितीयो भागः, पृ. ४७६
4. सूतसंहिता १।१।१४
5. सूतसंहिता, १।१।१४

सूतसंहितायाः टीकाकारेण माधवमन्त्रिणाऽपि एताः संहिता अष्टादशपुराणेषु त्रयोदशस्य स्कन्दपुराणस्याङ्गभूताः स्वीक्रियन्ते¹ । आर. सी. हाजरामहोदयानुसारेण स्कन्दपुराणस्य मुम्बई संस्करणे प्राप्तं खण्डविभाजनं मूलतः कयापि संहितयैव सम्बद्धं प्रतीयते² ।

वस्तुतः सूतसंहिता स्कन्दपुराणस्यैव अङ्गभूता सती पुराणमेव नोपपुराणमिति निष्कर्षः ।

सूतसंहिताविषयकं साहित्यम्—

टीकासम्पत्तयः—

- १- माधवमन्त्रिकृता तात्पर्यटीका—टीकेयं प्रकाशिताऽस्ति ।
- २- शङ्कराचार्यकृता सूतसंहिताव्याख्या-पाण्डुलिपिरूपा उपलभ्यते ।
- ३- यज्ञभैरवकृता टीका-सूतसंहितायाः सूतगीतोपरि ।
- ४- अप्पयशिवाचार्यकृतसूतसंहिताव्याख्यानम्-पाण्डुलिपिरूपेणोपलब्धम् ।
- ५- नीलकण्ठभाष्यम्-भाष्यमिदं सन्दिग्धम् ।

संग्रहग्रन्थाः—

- १- मुकुन्दाश्रमसंकलितः सूतसंहितासंग्रहः ।
- २- सदाशिवेन्द्रसंकलितः सूतसंहितासारसंग्रहः ।
- ३- बाला सरस्वतीलिखितं सूतसंहितासारामृतवचनम् ।
- ४- चिदम्बरस्वामिगललिखितं सूतसंहितैचिरहु ।

सूतसंहितायाः प्रतिपाद्या विषयाः—

सूतसंहिता चतुर्षु खण्डेषु विभक्ता वर्तते । तथा हि—

१-माहेश्वरखण्डः, २- ज्ञानयोगखण्डः, ३- मुक्तिखण्डः, ४- यज्ञवैभवखण्डः ।

यज्ञवैभव खण्डोऽपि द्विधा विभक्तः—

१- पूर्वभागः, २- उत्तरभागश्च । उत्तरभागोऽपि ब्रह्मगीतासूतगीताभेदाभ्यां द्विधा विभक्तोऽस्ति ।

माहेश्वरखण्डः—सूतसंहितायाः शिवमाहात्म्यखण्डस्य प्रथमाध्यायेऽस्ति ग्रन्थाव-
तारः । अत्र प्रामुख्येन अष्टादशपुराणोपपुराणवेदवेदस्मृत्यादयो निर्दिष्टाः सन्ति । अत्रैव
पुराणस्य

1. अथेदानीं विवक्षितां सूतसंहितामवतारयितुमनुक्रान्तां पुराणानां मध्ये त्रयोदशस्य स्कन्दपुराणस्य संहितादिविभागमाह । सूतसंहिता, १।१।१९, तात्पर्यटीका
2. स्टडीज़ इन दि पुराणिक रेकर्ड्स आन हिन्दू राइट्स एण्ड कस्टम्स, पृ. १५८, १६३

“सर्गश्च प्रतिसर्गश्च वंशो मन्वन्तराणि च
वंशानुचरितं चैव पुराणं पञ्चलक्षणम्”

इति लक्षणमपि कथितमस्ति । वेदार्थस्य विस्तार एव पुराणेतिहासयोः परमोद्देश्यमित्यपि स्फुटं निगादेतम् । सन्ति सर्वाणि स्मृतिशास्त्रपुराणानि वेदमूलानि । सर्वप्रथमं महेश्वरशिवस्यादेशादेव ब्रह्मा वैदिककर्मभागस्य स्मृतिमुखेन विष्णुश्च ज्ञानभागस्य व्यासरूपेण पुराणमुखेन वर्णनं चक्रतुः । महेश्वरः शिव एव सर्वेषां स्मृतिपुराणानामस्ति मूलकर्ता । तस्यैव शिवस्य प्रसादाद् ब्रह्मा, व्यासः व्यासस्य च पञ्च शिष्या वेदानां पुराणानाञ्च व्याख्यानं चक्रुः । ततः परमत्रैव पाशुपतव्रतस्य, ईश्वरस्य, महेश्वरपूजाविधेः, पराशक्तिपूजनस्य, मुक्तिसाधनस्य, कालसंख्यायाः, पृथिव्युद्धारस्य, सृष्टेः, हिरण्यगर्भस्य, जातिचतुष्टयोत्पत्तेः तीर्थमहिम्नश्च विशदं विवेचनं विद्यते । खण्डेऽस्मिन् सर्वं जगत् शिवकर्तृकमिति सम्यक् प्रतिपादितमस्ति । शिवस्य मायाशक्तिरेव विद्यते विश्वस्य संचालिका । अखिलं जगदिदं वर्तते शिवस्वरूपमेव । वैदवाक्यैः शिवस्वरूपं सम्यग् ज्ञात्वा पशुः (जीवात्मा) संसारबन्धाद् विमुच्यते ।

ज्ञानयोगखण्डः— खण्डेऽस्मिन् ज्ञानयोगस्य परम्पराऽस्त्यभिहिता । प्रथमतो भगवान् शिवो बृहस्पतये ज्ञानयोगमाह । पार्वत्या अङ्गे विद्यमानः स्कन्दोऽपि तं योगं शुश्राव । ततः परं स्कन्दो वसिष्ठाय, वसिष्ठः शक्तये, शक्तिः पराशराय, पराशरो व्यासाय, व्यासश्च सूताय ज्ञानयोगस्योपदेशं ददुः । परम्पराकथनोत्तरं हिरण्यगर्भोत्पत्तेः संक्षिप्तं वर्णनं विद्यते । तदुत्तरमाश्रमचतुष्टय-प्रायश्चित्त-दान-पापकर्मफल-देहोत्पत्ति-नाडीचक्र-अष्टाङ्गयोगादीनां विस्तरेण विवेचनं विद्यते । ब्रह्मज्ञानादेव मुक्तिर्न कर्मोपासनयेति सूतसंहितायाः सिद्धान्तः । यथाऽल्पोऽपि पावको महत्तमो दूरीकरोति तथैवाल्पमपि ज्ञानं महान्तं पापमपाकरोति । मोक्षप्राप्तौ ज्ञानमेव मुख्यं साधनं न कर्मेति वेदान्तसिद्धान्तेन संहितामतं साम्यं भजति ।

मुक्तिखण्डः—सूतसंहिताया अस्मिन् खण्डे मुक्ति-मुक्त्युपाय-मोचक-मोचकप्रदानां विवरणं प्राप्यते । भगवतो विष्णोर्मुक्तिविषयकजिज्ञासायाः समाधाने भगवता शङ्करेण सालोक्य-सामीप्य-सारूप्य-सायुज्यरूपाश्-चतुर्विधा मुक्तयो वर्णिताः । आसु चतुर्विधासु मुक्तिषु प्रथमाः सालोक्यादयस्तिष्ठो मुक्तयः सन्ति कर्मफलभूताः, तुरीया सायुज्यरूपा मुक्तिस्तु ज्ञानफलभूता ब्रह्मस्वरूपैव वरीवर्ति । स्वात्मतत्त्वे सर्वार्थतत्त्वबुद्धिरेव जीवन्मुक्तिरिति सूतसंहिताया निश्चितं मतम् । खण्डस्यावसाने शिवनर्तनस्य वर्णनमत्यन्तोपयोगि वर्तते शिवप्रसादप्राप्तये ।

यज्ञवैभवखण्डः—पूर्वभागः - सूतसंहितायास्तृतीये मुक्तिखण्डे ज्ञानमुक्त्योर्विवेचनं कृतमस्ति । यज्ञशब्दस्य प्राधान्येन क्रियाभेदे (कर्मयज्ञे) प्रसिद्धिकारणात् ज्ञानेऽनादरो मा

भूदतो ज्ञानस्य यज्ञरूपत्वं, कर्मयज्ञापेक्षया ज्ञानयज्ञस्य श्रेयोरूपत्वञ्च निरूपयितुं खण्डेऽस्मिन् यज्ञवैभवस्य विस्तरेण वर्णनं कृतम् । खण्डोऽयं यज्ञशब्दस्य कर्मयज्ञ-ज्ञानयज्ञरूपयोः प्रथमस्य कर्मयज्ञस्य गौणरूपेण द्वितीयस्य ज्ञानयज्ञस्य मुख्यरूपेण प्रतिपादनं करोति ।

अस्ति यज्ञस्य स्थूल-सूक्ष्मरूपं भेदद्वयम् । तत्र कर्मयज्ञः स्थूलरूपो ज्ञानयज्ञश्च सूक्ष्मरूपः । स्थूलकर्मयज्ञोऽपि कायिक-वाचिक-मानसभेदेन त्रिविधा भवन्ति । एषु नित्यनैमित्तिकादयः कर्मकलापाः कायिकः, मन्त्राणाञ्जपो वाचिकः, देवताध्यानञ्च मानसो यज्ञः उच्यन्ते । एतेषु स्थूलयज्ञेषु उत्तरोत्तरो यज्ञः श्रेष्ठो निगद्यते । अस्मिन्नेव क्रमे मन्त्रोपासनायाः सूक्ष्मविवेचनं विद्यते । मन्त्रेषु प्रणव-सावित्री-आत्ममन्त्र-षडक्षर-मन्त्राणामुपासनाविधेमन्त्रजपफलस्य च निर्देशो वर्तते । ततः परं ध्यान-ज्ञानयोगयोर्विशदं विवेचनं विद्यते । ज्ञानयज्ञवर्णनप्रसंग एव माया-अविद्या-प्रमाण-विज्ञान-पराशक्ति-शिवभेद-ज्ञानोत्पत्त्युपाय-नित्यानित्यवस्तु-विशिष्टधर्म-शिवभक्ति-परमतत्त्व-लिङ्गतत्त्व-शिवस्थान-भस्मवैभव-शिवप्रीतिकरवस्तु-नामकीर्तन-सम्प्रदायसमन्वय-सद्योमुक्ति-करोपाय-श्रुतिविरोधपरिहार-पातकादीनि गूढतत्त्वानि सूक्ष्मतया विस्तरेण सन्ति विश्लेषितानि ।

उत्तरभागः— यज्ञवैभवखण्डस्योत्तरभागे स्तो द्वे गीते-ब्रह्मगीता सूतगीता च । ब्रह्मगीतायां प्रथमतो ब्रह्मणा वेदार्थो निरूपितः । वस्तुतः परात्परः शिव एव निखिलस्य वेदस्य परमार्थः । आत्माभिधः सः शुद्धोऽद्वितीयश्च वर्तते । अस्ति तस्यैव शिवस्य विवर्तोऽयं प्रपञ्चः । ततः परमस्यां ब्रह्मगीतायां ब्रह्म-ब्रह्मात्म्यैक्य-चैतन्यात्मकारणत्व-पञ्चीकरण-तत्त्वपदार्थनिरूपण-दहरपुण्डरीकप्रभृतयोऽध्यात्मविषयाः सम्यग् विवेचिताः सन्ति । ब्रह्मगीतायाः पञ्चमोऽध्यायोऽध्यात्मदृष्ट्याऽतीव महनीयो वर्तते । सूतगीतायां प्रथमतः पशु-पाश-पतीनां सारगर्भं वर्णनं विद्यते । ततः परं वेदस्य स्वतः प्रामाण्यम्, सर्वशास्त्रार्थसंग्रहः रहस्यानि च सन्ति विवेचितानि । अस्याः सूतगीताया अन्तिमेऽध्याये “अहं ब्रह्मास्मि”, “अयमात्मा ब्रह्म”, “प्रज्ञानं ब्रह्म”, “तत्त्वमसि श्वेतकेतो” इत्यादीनि वेदान्तवाक्यानि समासेन वर्णितानि सन्ति ।

उपसंहारः— औपनिषदविचारप्रभाविता सूतसंहिता ब्रह्मणि सत्यत्वं, यावज्जगति च मिथ्यात्वं प्रतिपादयति । सा हि सिद्धान्ततो ब्रह्मविश्वयोस्तात्त्विकं भेदमस्वीकरोति । अध्यात्मतत्त्वविवेचने सूतसंहिता उपनिषत्सांख्ययोगन्याय-मीमांसा-वेदान्तसिद्धान्तान् क्रचित्संक्षेपेण क्रचिद् विस्तरेण क्वापि शब्दतः क्वापि चानुवादतो वर्णयति । धार्मिकतत्त्वविवेचने धर्मसूत्र-स्मृति-पुराण-सम्पद्भ्योऽनुप्राणिता लक्ष्यते सूतसंहिता । भारतीय-शास्त्रोपजीव्यत्वे धर्मदर्शनयोः शोभनः समन्वयः सूतसंहिताया महनीयोपलब्धिरिति शम् ।

In Memoriam

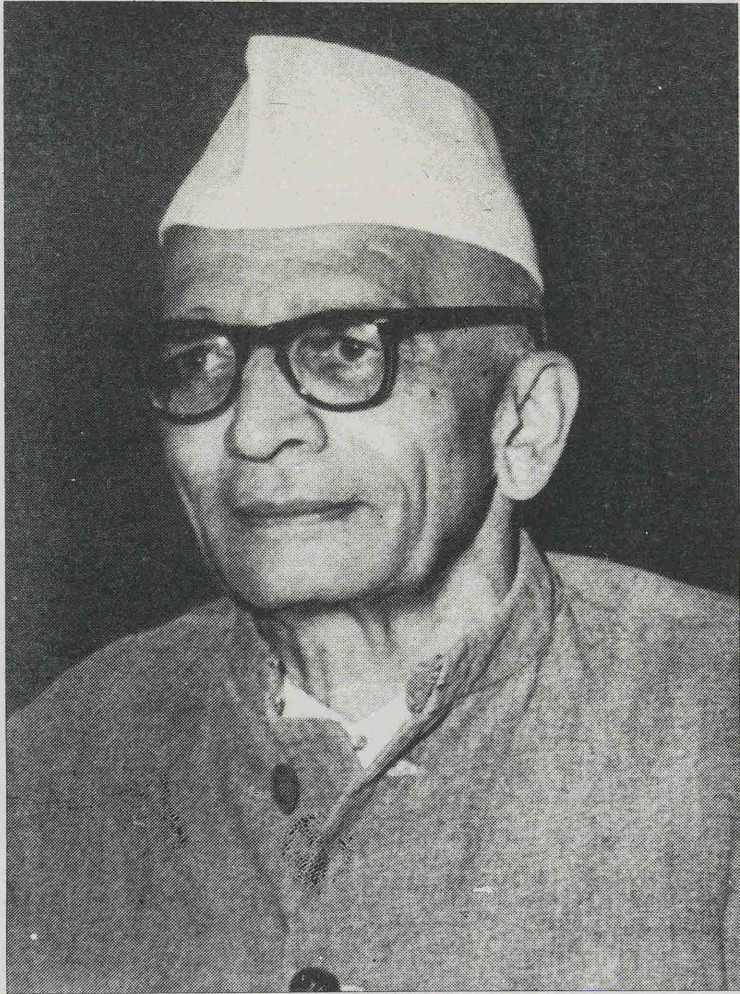
PROFESSOR RAMCHANDRA NARAYAN DANDEKAR

Sanskrit literature, ancient Indian history and cultural especially Vedic studies lost a highly respected scholar, an eminent patron and an erudite protector in the death, on 11 December 2001, of Dr. Ramachandra Narayan Dandekar. He was an organiser par excellence of institutions dealing with oriental studies and was the guiding light for many of these. In his death the illustrious constellation of orientalist lost one of their most resplendent stars. Students and researchers, especially in the area of Vedic studies have lost their guide and wellwisher in the death of Dr. Dandekar. The loss is not likely to be filled up in the near or fore-seeable future. Dr. V. Raghavan and Dr. R.N. Dandekar almost contemporaries were the most honoured and exceptionally gifted scholars in Sanskrit literary world during the second half of the twentieth century. Since the death of Dr. V. Raghavan, Dr. Dandekar had been the sole light house illuminating the field by his scholarly radiance and now the whole horizon is dark.

Dr. Dandekar was born in Satara on 10 March 1909 in a Brahmin family. After completing his school education in Satara, young Dandekar joined Willingdon College in Sangli and later on Deccan College in Pune. His teachers in Sanskrit included Professor P.L. Vaidya at Willingdon and Professor S.K. Belvalkar at Deccan College. Later on both Prof. Belvalkar and Prof., Vaidya joined the Banaras Hindu University and came in intimate contact with the Kashiraj. Dr. Dandekar kept alive this tradition after the death of his illustrious teachers and kept in constant touch with the late Maharaja Dr. Vibhuti Narain Singhji and the All India Kashiraj Trust.

Dr. Dandekar passed his M.A. Sanskrit examination in 1931 securing a first class and standing first in the class from Bombay University. Two years later in 1933 he obtained another M.A. in Ancient Indian History and Culture again securing first class and first position in the University. He obtained his Ph.D. degree from Heidelberg University in Germany, one of the most well known German Universities for Sanskrit studies. He thus learnt early in life both the oriental and occidental techniques of study and research which he utilised extensively during the course of his life long activities. In an exceptionally rare honour the Heidelberg University renewed his Doctorate degree in 1988 on the strength of his more than fifty years of extensive studies in Sanskrit literature.

Professor Dr. RAMCHANDRA NARAYAN DANDEKAR



b. 17-3-1909]

[d. 11-12-2001

Dr. Dandekar was an exceptional teacher devoting forty years of his life to the teaching of Sanskrit, Ancient Indian History and Culture and specially Vedas. Soon after passing his M.A. Sanskrit Exams he was appointed a lecturer in Furguson College where he taught Sanskrit and Ancient History till 1950. He used to teach the full spectrum of subjects associated with Sanskrit in the Furguson College. When Poona University was established in 1950, Dr. Dandekar was appointed first Professor and Head of the Sanskrit Department there. He devoted his teaching to Vedic studies in the University. A centre of advanced studies in Veda was established by the University Grants Comission at Poona and Dr. Dandekar was appointed as its Director. He retired from University service in 1973 after attaining the age of 65. The University appointed him as an Emeritus Professor. He had also served as Dean and as Vice Chancellor of Poona University.

Dr. Dandekar spent his whole life in study, research and teaching. The list of his essays and books is a long one. His essays have been published collectively in several volumes. Two felicitation Volumes have been brought in his honour which give a complete list of his publications. His magnum opus Vedic Bibliography has been published in five long volumes and includes list of the all available texts and articles on Vedic studies with critical review. His brief comments on the various texts and papers are a testimony to his vast erudition. He was working on the sixth volume of this series when death snatched him away. All subsequent scholars of Vedic literature will owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Dandekar for this contribution. Some of his other main publications are 1. Vedic mythological tracts, 2. Insight into Hinduism; 3 Exercise in Indology; 4. The Age of the Guptas and other Essays; 5. Indological Miscellanea; 6. Some Aspects of the History of Hinduism; 7. Critical Editions of Śalya and Anuśāsana parvans of the Mahābhārata and 8. Five translation volumes of the Śrautakośa.

Dr. Dandekar was honoured both at home and abroad for his scholarship, outstanding researches and erudite texts. He was appointed member - secretary of the Sanskrit Commission by the Govt. of India in 1955. He was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1962 and served for many years as National Professor an honour bestowed on very few. Many state governments have honoured him with cash prizes of upto 1 lac rupees and many universities honoured him by their Honorary degrees and invited him to address their convocations. He was also President of the Indian Oriental conference and World Sanskrit Congress.

Dr. Dandekar had an uncanny ability to run institutions. He was Secretary General of the All India Oriental conference and of the Bhandarkar Oriental Institute for almost half a century. The two organisations achieved world wide reputation under his able

administration and high quality research supervision. For a person to be freely and democratically elected to such positions continuously for such a long duration is in itself a tribute to the importance and ability of the person concerned. His amiability, integrity and capacity for hard work coupled with administrative acumen was so highly regarded by his colleagues that he had to insist to be relieved of these burdens at an advanced age. He however retained his concern and interest in the well being of these organizations till the end.

Dr. Dandekar was a stickler for discipline. His public and private lives were kept scrupulously separate. In public domain he would not encourage any one to linger with himself once the work was over. In private he was not easily accessible. He was firm in carrying out decisions and was immune to pressure. Despite his stern exterior he was very soft and emotional in his core-almost like a coconut.

He was always considerate and free with his valuable guidance and advice to young and striving Sanskrit and oriental scholars. When I prepared a Hindi translation of the Śāṅkhāyana Brāhmaṇa, I requested him to write a foreword. He gracefully acquiesced in this and wrote a masterful and scholarly foreword. I translated it in Hindi and sent the translation along with the proof for his perusal. He not only corrected the proofs carefully but also improved upon the Hindi version. He was very prompt in replying to any letters that were sent to him. His reply to the last letter I wrote a year before his death was a very emotional one.

He was associated with the All India Kashiraj Trust and its Purāna Deptt from its inception. When the first meeting to plan for the publication of the Critical editions of the Purāṇas was held in the sylvan surroundings of Chakia forest (Varanasi) he participated in it and actively guided the plan. Whenever he used to come to Varanasi for the meetings of the Oriental Congress or the Executive Council of the Banaras Hindu University he would definitely meet the Kashi Naresh. He was nominated to the membership of the editorial board of Purāṇa and a member of the board for the Trust, he gladly accepted, telling the Maharaja Dr. Vibhuti Narain Singhji that 'I can not refuse any of your orders'. He was so attached to the Kashiraj that when Fifth World Sanskrit conference in 1981 was to be held in India as the President of the conference he prevailed upon the Govt. of India to hold it at Varanasi, rather than at Delhi (which was the choice of the Govt.) In his condolence message to Maharaja Anant Narain Singhji on the demise of Maharaja Dr. Vibhuti Narain Singh he expressed his feeling towards the late Maharaja in highly endearing and emotional words. His letter written to the present Maharaja

Kashinaresh Sri Anant Narain Singh speaks of his deep attachment to the Kashinaresh and the All India Kashiraj Trust :

R. N. DANDEKAR
National Research Professor

Bhandarkar Oriental Research
Institute,
PUNE 411 004 (India)
Phone No. : 356932

237/201
4th June 2001

Respected Maharajasaheb,

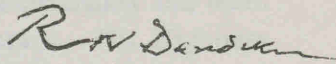
I feel highly elated by your kind letter of May 27, 2001. I am particularly happy to be assured that I continue to be favoured by the blessings of your most revered father, and of your good self who has conscientiously followed in the foot-steps of your father. This has certainly gives you great moral and spiritual strength.

My family and friends, and I, ^{are} also thankful for your generous gift of Langda mangoes.

May the work of the Kashiraj trust prosper under your benign guidance and leadership

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,


(R. N. Dandekar)

Honourable Kashi Naresh
Fort, Ramnagar
Varanasi - 221 008

He always strived to contribute to Purana from the Bhandarkar Institute. He got his colleagues Dr. Pusalker and Dr. Bedekar to contribute and he himself wrote many articles. It is our hope that this tradition would continue even after his death.

Personally I was always blessed by him. He always replied to my Pranam with the words Kalyāṇa Ho. He encouraged me always to strive forward in better and further publication. Such illustrious scholars never die.

नास्ति तेषां यशःकाये जरामरणजं भयम् ।

-Dr. Ganga Sagar Rai

ACTIVITIES OF THE ALL INDIA KASHIRAJ TRUST

(July 2002-December 2002)

Garuḍa Purāṇa work

The printing of the Critical edition of the Garuḍa Purāṇa is in progress.

Śivadharmā Purāṇa

During the period text of the Purāṇa was compared with manuscripts. After checking of the manuscripts the text will be finalised.

Visitors to the Purāṇa Department

Many scholars visited the Purāṇa Deptt. during this period. Scholars were happy to note the activities of the Purāṇa Deptt. Necessary informations were supplied to the researchers.

Rāmalilā

This year the famous Rāmalilā of Ramnagar, organised every year by the All India Kashiraj Trust was held from Bhādrapada Śukla Caturdaśī (Ananta Caturdaśī- 20 Sept. 2002) to Āśvina Pūrṇimā (Oct 17, 2002) As usual the daily visitors to the Rāmalilā were many thousands and on special days their number was in lacs. Besides the daily visitors called as 'Nemīs' number of general public is also increasing every year. Some foreign scholars and tourists also observe the Rāmalilā. For whole month during the Rāmalilā period free provisions were given to saints and sādhus. They were about one thousand daily. His Highness Kashinaresh Maharaja Shri Anant Narain Singh daily visited the Rāmalilā and was present in Rāmalilā during the whole time of performance.

Rāsalilā

In this year the Rāsalilā performed by the Rāsamaṇḍalī (actors of Rāsalilā) was organised from Śrāvana Śukla Dvitiyā (11th August 2002) to Śrāvana Pūrṇimā (21 August 2002) in Prasiddha Garden of the Ramnagar. During the Rāsalilā period Pt. Ganpati Shukla and Pt. Aruṇa Kumar Jha daily recited the Rādhāsahasranāma and tenth Skandha of the Śrīmadbhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa, His Highness

Kashinaresh Maharaja Sri Anant Narain Singh was daily present at Rāsalilā ground during the performance of the Rāsalilā. A good number of local public daily saw the Rāsalilā.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SISTER TRUST

MAHARAJA BENARES VIDYAMANDIR TRUST

Museum

The Museum run by the Maharaja Benares Vidyamandir Trust is a good attraction to the tourists and visitors to Varanasi. With the new addition of painting gallery the attraction of tourists has increased. Besides the Indian tourists a good number of foreign visitors also daily come to see the museum.

सर्वभारतीय काशिराज न्यायस्य कार्यविवरणम्

(जुलाई २००२-दिसम्बर २००२)

पुराणकार्यम्

गरुडपुराणम्

अस्मिन् कार्यावधौ गरुडपुराणस्य पाठसमीक्षितसंस्करणस्य मुद्रणकार्यं प्रचलितम् ।

शिवधर्मपुराणम्

अस्य पुराणस्य पाठस्यान्वीक्षणं हस्तलेखपाठाधारेण कृतम् ।

पुराणविभागे समागता विद्वांसः

बहवो विद्वांसः अनुसन्धित्सवश्च पुराणविभागे समागताः । ते पुराणकार्यजातं दृष्ट्वा प्रयाविता आसन् । शोधछात्रेभ्यः अपेक्षिता सहायता प्रदत्ता ।

रामलीला

अस्मिन् वर्षे रामनगरस्य विश्वविश्रुता रामलीला अनन्तचतुर्दशीदिनमारभ्य आश्विनपूर्णिमापर्यन्तं (२० सितम्बर २००२ दिनाङ्कतः १७ अक्टूबर २००२ दिनाङ्कं यावत्) प्रचलिता । पूर्ववत् रामलीलादर्शकाणां संख्या प्रतिदिनम् अनेकसहस्रपरिमिता विशेषलीलादिनेषु च लक्षाधिका आसीत् । नियमितरूपेण दर्शकाणां (नेमी इति प्रथितानां) संख्या यथापूर्वमासीत् । सामान्यजनतायाः वैदेशिकपर्यटकानामपि संख्या प्रतिवर्षं वर्धमाना वर्तते । मासं यावत् साधुभ्यः निशुल्का भोजनसामग्री वितरिता । प्रतिदिनं एतादृशसाधूनां संख्या प्रायः सहस्रपरिमिता आसीत् । प्रतिदिनं तत्र भवन्तः काशिनरेशाः महाराजा श्रीअनन्तनारायणसिंहशर्माणः लीलाप्रदर्शनकाले लीलाभूमौ उपस्थिता आसन् ।

रासलीला

अस्मिन् वर्षे रासलीलायाः प्रदर्शनं श्रावणशुक्लद्वितीयातिथिमारभ्य श्रावण-पूर्णिमापर्यन्तं (अगस्त ११ तः अगस्त २१ दिनांकं २००२ पर्यन्तं) रामनगरस्थिते प्रसिद्धो-द्याने संपन्नम् । रासलीलायाः प्रदर्शनं वृन्दावनतः आगतया रासमण्डल्या कृतम् । रासलीलाप्रदर्शनावसरे-प्रतिदिनं रासलीलाभूमौ श्रीमद्भागवतपुराणस्य दशमस्कन्धस्य

श्रीराधासहस्रनाम्नां च पाठः पण्डितगणपतिशुक्लमहोदयेन पण्डितअरुणकुमारज्ञा-
महोदयेन च रासलीलाभूमौ कृतः । रासलीलाप्रदर्शनावसरे प्रतिदिनं न्यासाध्यक्षाः
काशिनरेशा महाराजा अनन्तनारायणसिंहशर्मदेवाः रासलीलायायुपस्थिता आसन् । बहु-
संख्यकाः स्थानीयनागरिका रासलीलाया अवलोकनं चक्रुः ।

सहयोगिन्यासानां कार्यविवरणम्

महाराज बनारस विद्यामन्दिरन्यासः

संग्रहालयः

महाराजबनारसविद्यामन्दिरन्यासेन संचालितः संग्रहालयः वाराणसीं समागतेभ्यः
यात्रिभ्यः पर्यटकेभ्यश्च अतीतवाकर्षणकेन्द्रभूतोऽस्ति । अस्य संग्रहालयस्य चित्रवीथिका-
संयोजनेन आकर्षणविस्तृतिः संजाता । भारतीयपर्यटकातिरिक्तं बहुसंख्यका वैदेशिकाः
पर्यटकाः प्रत्यहं संग्रहालयावलोकनं कुर्वन्ति ।

The 'Purāṇa', Bulletin has been started by the Purāṇa Department of the All-India Kashiraj Trust with the aim of organizing the manifold studies relating to the Purāṇas. It specially discusses the several aspects of text-reconstruction, of the interpretation of the vast cultural and historical material, and of the obscure esoteric symbolism of legends and myths in the Purāṇas.

The editors invite contributions from all those scholars who are interested in the culture of Purāṇa literature in which the religion and philosophy of the Vedas have found the fullest expression.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FOUR NEW PROJECTS

The All-India Kashiraj Trust has resolved to introduce four new Projects for the advancement of Puranic learning. The Trust heartily requests all interested in Puranic study for cooperation.

(1) Publication of monographs dealing with Puranic literature (i.e. works bearing the name of Purāṇa or Upapurāṇa) in all the regional languages of India. Each monograph should contain a detailed account of published works, of MSS. preserved in the libraries and the Private Collections and of works known through quotations.

(2) Publication of unpublished theses on important Puranic subjects.

(3) Publication of a series of monographs (not less than 100 pages) on the lives of the great sages as described in Puranic literature.

(4) Publication of Sanskrit Digests by traditional scholars on Puranic subjects. These digests may be published in the Bulletin also.