

THE FOURTEEN SHASTRAS IN FOUR VEDAS

Author

Jyotish Baran Roy

HOD

Department of Sanskrit

Dhubri Girls College

Dhubri, Assam, India.

roydhubri76@gmail.com

Purana, the Sanskrit word, meaning "ancient" or "old" is a genre of ancient Indian literature found in Hinduism. A large number of topics are like cosmogony, cosmology, folk tales, pilgrimages, temples, medicine, astronomy, honours, love stories, grammar, mineralogy, genealogies of Gods, Goddesses, Kings, heroes, sages and demigods are included in Puranas.

The first Puranas are believed to be composed between the 3rd and 10th centuries C.E. and the most famous one among them being "Bhagavata Purana" is nothing but a description of the childhood and early life of Krishna. Where the various Puranas are containing information about Yoga, the "Bhagavata Purana" gives the readers an opportunity to exercise and practice Bhakti Yoga.

"Puranang vedasanmatam" – the puranas are composed just following the Vedas. The puranas sing for the Vedas only. The puranas called the Vedajna Brahmanas as the greatest of human race and it is called "Puranamakhyanam" means "Purani Akhyana" or "Ancient narration". As it is a very ancient book, and so it is called "Purana". The ancient narrations are especially found in Puranas. About history is also mentioned along with Puranas in Indian literature. History is the description of the incidents that happened in the past; but the subject matters of Puranas is more widened and broadened as compared to that of history. On the basis of this fundamental difference the name of history and Purana are kept separately.

"Itihasapurang Panchamang Vedang Vedama"

Atharvaveda

Itihasapurana is just like Panchyam Veda. It is not only Atharvaveda but also Chandagyo Upanisada that regarded Itihasapurana as "Panchyam Veda". A very beautiful description about it is given by Purana as follows:-

*"Itihash –puranavyang vedang shamupabringhayet.
Vivettalpa shrutad vedo mamoyong praharishyati.
Purana- purnachandrena shrutijyotshna prakashita.
Nribuddhikoibananacha kritamet prakashanam"*

Mahabharata, Adiparba

A detailed description about the politics, social rules, creative status, even every matter beginning from Brahmatatwa to Vaktitawa is found in the great book titled "Great Naradiya"

Purana''. "The Naradiya Purana'' is the best among the all Purana and Upa-Purana. A description about the politics , social rules, religious rules, neat and cleanliness devapuja, devamahatma, various mantras, various narrations and the processes of Puja of various devotas etc., are found in this Puranas .

"Yasmat pura hi anati idang puranam"

The Purana shastras along with the two great books Veda and Vedanta is playing a very important Impact in Indian culture. The dictionary meaning of Purana is ancient narration. The history puranang Vedasanmatam is also included here in this Purana along with the religious theory. One can go the narration, sub – narration through the story. Just like the three features of 'Satwa', 'Raja'and 'Tama'are covering our this earth ; these three features self expressed themselves in the shapes of 'Satwik Purana', 'Rajashik Purana'and 'Tamashik Purana' and by finding their expression in "Puranas". Not only so, the four purposes of 'Dharma', ' Artha', 'Kamo' and 'Moksha' are expressed nicely in every forms of Puranas .

The relation between this and that among these four are also found in the 'Purana'. All acquires if they listen to Puranas and the stories of Puranas. Far this we are very much great full to Maharshi Krishna Dwaipayana Veda Vyasha. This Bhagavata like a Maharishi has done a great job and great success to the whole human race by composing a book out of some of the Puranas, those are the orally heard and alive through our memories. Hearing and listening and memory are always at the core of Hindu religion. Puranas don't only follow hearing , listening and memory , but also have done a lot to them

*"Krishnadwaipayanang Vyasang Viddhi narayana Pravuma'
Kehonnyo hi bhuri maitraya Mahabharatkritatbhabet"*

It can't be said that those "Puranas" which are in vogue in present days society, most of them obey Puranas ancient customs and traditional. Moreover, many of the Puranas are in vogue at present through one or two outdated customs or those customs that are going on partially. In this condition, it is necessary to analysis in detail each Mahapurana out of the mentioned 18(Eighteen) Puranas. On the basis of the necessity of analysis of the Mahapuranas, the "Four Vedas Fourteen Shastras" meaning Rik Veda, Yajur Veda, Shama Veda and Atharva Veda, along with these fourteen Shastras Education Kalpa, Nirukta, Grammar rhyme and Jyotisha six vedangas; Ayurveda, Dhanurveda, Gandharva Veda and Arthasastra for Upavedas, "religious Sastras", 'Purana' Justice and solution (Mimangsha) – Four upangas; in total 'Fourteen Shastras' are to be analysed in detail. The 'Puranas' are called or named or titled as the 'body parts' (or Upanga) of veda.

There are mainly 18th Major Puranas and 18th Minor Puranas , covering almost 4,00,000 verses, Puranas generally has the five topics :-

- Cosmogony
- Cosmology
- Genealogy of Gods ,Sages and Kings
- Cosmic cycles
- Legends during the times of various Kings .

However, the characteristics increase in numbers by the addition of five more characteristics as given by Bhagavata Purana :-

- Karmic links between the deities, sages, kings and living beings.
- Finale or cessation
- Tales about god(s).
- Refuge
- Spritual liberation (moksha)..

As all of the Purana tents are found to be sectarian and dedicated to certain deities – Gods and Goddesses , so one of the purposes of the Puranas was also to bring people closer to Gods .As a result of it ,the common people gain an opportunity to an access and understanding of the essentials and complex yogic philosophies of the ancient Vadic texts.In Purana the devotional aspect of yoga is emphasized.

Whereas “ Bhagavata Purana” describing Bhakti Yoga and outliming its practice,” Linga Purana “ covering and touching the areas of Yama (discipline) , Niyama (vertures) and Pranayama (breathing techniques);and “Vayu Purana “ consisting information about protyahara(withdrawal of sences), Dharma(concentration) and Dhyana (meditation).

I. CLASSIFICATION OF MAJOR PURANAS

There are 18th Major Purana as given below :-

- Bhagavata Purana
- Vishnu Purana
- Naradiya Purana
- Vamana Purana
- Matsya Purana
- Garuda Purana
- Brahma Purana
- Bhavishya Purana
- Agni Purana
- Brahma Vaivarta Purana
- Brahmanda Purana
- Padma Purana
- Shiva Purana
- Linga Purana
- Kurma Purana
- Markandeya Purana
- Varaha Purana and
- Skanda Purana .

“The Mahapuranas’ claim to be as ancient as the Vaidic literature. According to ‘Matsha Purana’ (5/3/9) Brahma created ‘Puranas’ at the very beginning of creating every other ‘shastras’. The other shastras are created from the side of Brahma only after that.

*'Puranang Sharvashastranang Prathamang Brahmana Kritam.
Anantarancha Bakrevyo Bedantasah binirgatah.'*

Maharshi Krishnadwaipayana Vyasdeva created the 'Puranas' mixing the Akhyanas and Upakhyanas. Vyasadeva after composing the 'Purana Sanhita' made Sutaputra Lomaharshana as its weapon. Lomaharshana composed himself the "Purana Sanhita" just by the mercy of the Guru.

*'Sargashcha Prati Sargashcha BangshoManwantarani Cha.
Bansha-nu-charitang Chaibo puranang panchalakshanam.'*

Bishnu Purana 3.6.25

Meaning, Sharga from the beginning of creation to the end of creation, Pratisarga from just after the creation of Brahma to the period of "dakhadi prajapati", "Bangsha shrishi" (angel, ashura, the fathers, rishi, muni character) Kalpamanyantar (In Any Kalpa of Brahma and any manwantara of the 'Monus')

Bansha-nu-chariting (during the region of any Maharaja), the incident happened. In this way, first of all swarga, secondly, pratiswargas, thirdly, creates Yajaka's generation, fourthly, determining the time of "Kalpa Manyantar and fifty, during the region of any king the incident happened. The "Vishnu Purana" is the oldest purana. Five characteristics are found in this "Mahapurano". The pandit acharyas fixed that all the "Maha Puranas" should consist of these five characteristics. "Srimat Bhagavata" or Maha Bhagavata Purana was composed as the next period composition or production of Vishnu Purano. This Purana consists of 10 (ten) characteristics in lieu of 5 (five) characteristics.

*"Sargaha Syatha Visharagacha Britti Rakhantarani Cha
Bangshabangshanu – charitang Shangstha, Hetur Prashrayah
Dashavilokhone jyuktong Puranang taddidowidung
Kechit Panchabidhong Brahmanmah dalpabebosthaya"*

(Bhagavata Purano – 12, 7, 9, 10)

Meaning, 'Swarga', viswarga, 'britti', 'rakha', 'antar' (manyantar), 'bangsha' (race of the nripatis) 'bangshanu charito' (Rishi Devguru) 'Sangstha' (Pralaya) 'hetu' (Cause of creation) and 'apashraya' (shelter of all) --- Mahapurana consists of the 10(ten) features.

Thereafter, the 10(ten) features of the below mentioned Puranas are recognized and considered to be continued – 1. Brahma Purana 2. Padmapurana 3. Vishnu 4. Shiv 5. Linga 6. Goruda 7. Narada 8. Bhagabata 9. Agni 10. Skanda 11. Bhabishya 12. Brahma Vaivarta 13. Markandeyo 14. Vaman 15. Varaha 16. Matsya 17. Kurma 18. Brahmando Mahapurano. Thus, the features of 'Purana' are considered not only for the here mentioned features but also for religion, artha, kamo and moksha etc.

On the basis of their merits, the 'Mahapurans' are divided into three ---

- **Satwika Purana:** ‘Satwika Purana’ is that Purana by which Purana prayer to God is performed with ‘Satwika’ or in a right way. Examples of Satwika Maha Puranas are – 1. Vishnu Purana 2. Narada Purana 3. Bhagawata Purana 4. Garura Purana 5. Padma Purana and 6. Varaha Purana.
- **Rajashik Purana** is related to Brahma.As for example, 1.Brahma Purana ,2. Brahmanda Purana ,3. Brahmavaivarta Purana, 4. Markandaya Purana, 5. Vamana Purana and 6. Bhavishya Purana
- **Tamashika Purana:** According to ‘Tamashika Purana’ some rituals are performed with some evil intention of doing or conducting some evil deeds that is called in Sanskrit “with Tamashika surrounded by the virtue of ‘Tama’ (evil) The ‘Tatwika Mahapurano’ consists of – 1. Shiva Purana 2. Matsya Purana 3. Kurma Purana 4. Linga Purano 5. Agni Purana and 6. Skanda Purana.

These Mahapuranas are even categorized into six more puranas on the basis of three religious – ‘Vaishnava’, ‘Shaiba’ and ‘Shakta’. These are – 1. Vaishnava Mahapurano – Vishnu, Narada, Bhagwata, Goruda, Padma and Boraha, 2. Shaiva Maha Purana – Shiva (Air) Linga, Skanda, Agni, Matsya and Vamana, 3. Shakta Maha Purana – Brahma Purana, Brahma Vaivarta Purana and Bhavishya Purana, 4. Brahmanda Purana 5. Kurma Purana and 6. Markendeyo Purana.

It has been tried to establish the statue of the great lord Bishnu as well as to describe and express the greatness of Bhagwan Bhisnu in the Mahapurana. As for example, a description of Lord Bhisnu is found in ‘Bhisnu Purana’, whereas, and the same about Lord Shiva is found in ‘Shiva Purana’ In this way, based on the social origin of ages – gods like Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva and their virtue, pride, honour and greatness and their importance are described in the Maha Puranas, and accordingly, various types of descriptive works are composed and produced. Beside this, it has been tried to compose various social, religious and cultural chapters . In that era, ‘BARNASHRAM DHARMA’ was the social duty of the people of all races and castes to be doen properly. Besides, it has been seen to describe the presentation of various cultures, rules and regulations, manners and behaviours, foods and eating habits, male and female duties towards each other, punishment, sin and the ways to rescue from it, various hells and the various ways to save mankind from hells; good deeds always result in good, evil deeds also result in evil, that is called ‘karmabipaka’, a gift, result of gift, the service of worship, fasting, pilgrimage, holy journey, Mandir and devata’s establishment, family profession, shuddhi of materials, the chapters of dream, medical treatment, prayer and concept of prayer, cremation, the rules of birth’s after death etc.

Besides, the religious views of Brahmanas established on the basis of hearing and remembrance as mentioned in Purana, there is also the description of different people of religions belonging to various areas of ancient India. It is called ‘Religious revolt’ according to which the society was governed at that time. It as if the seems other non-Vaidik religions views come out taking the ‘Vaidik devata’ asits centre. It’s consequences are – the Brahma, Pancharatro, Vaishnava, Bhagabati Vaishnava, Shaiva Shakto, Lingajato etc. Some religious views originating from non-voidik sources abled to come to the inclusion of traditions of Purana in the next period. The consequence of such views are the origin of the religions of

Shaktivada, Ganapatta etc. Some people were the dogmatic supporters of such views whereas some others were having broad thinking regarding 'Sarbadharma'.

The base of 'Brahmano' religion supporting 'Purana' is 'Veda'. The Brahmanas performed the puja – archanas in the 'place of Yajñā' or 'place of puja' by reciting and pronouncing 'Mantras of veda' and putting oil to the agni with the objective of satisfying the devatas (gods). That is why, the Brahmanas acquired and occupied higher and respectful positions in society with some dignity.

The Brahmanas are respected as belonging to the Intellectual class in ancient society of the 'Arya'. It were the Brahmanas only who gave directions to obey duty and responsibilities for the 'Kshatriyas' and 'Baishyas' and 'Sudras' were prohibited to attend any religious occasion and program. They should help the 'Dwijas' in agriculture or other household activities. At that time, the society of 'Fourvaranas' was well-established. All were waiting to observe the development of the 'society of Sarbajanina' based on new religious views. In that condition, the movement of new religion became strong and due to the reason of disobeying the authority and rules and regulations of veda a large number of people of society raised their voice directly against the Brahmanas. As a result, destruction could be seen in the religions that were based on 'Vaidik Yajñā'.

It was mentioned in 'Devi-Bhagabata' established just after the age of the 'Maha Puranas' that the 'Stree', 'Shudra', 'dijabandhus' should not listen to 'Veda Mantras'. The Puranas were composed for them.

*Stree-Shudra Dija-bandhunang na veda shrabanang matama.
Teshameba hitarthayo Puranani Kritani cha.*

(Devi – Bhagabata 1.3.21)

It is also said in Purana that, the Brahmanas of the new era will be of minimum intelligence. So, they will be of unfit to listen the recitation of Veda. They will be fit to listen only to the recitation of Purana. To have known this Godcomposed the Puranas. The 'certical theory of Veda' was composed and released as fit to all in the Puranas. That is why, the Puranas are called the base of Veda and Vedantas. In the present scenario too, majority of the Hindu Brahmanas do not give importance to the practice of Veda and in exchange of it they recite the Puranas. The result of the study of Veda are found in the study of the 'Purana Shastras'. So, Purana is supreme out of the 'Fourteen Shastra'. A description about 'Fourteen Shastra' in Vishnu Purana is given as follows :-

*“Agani Vedashchattara Mimangsha Nayawistarah,
Puranang dharma-shastrang cha vidya hotashchaturdasa
‘Ayurveda dhanurveda gandharbachaiba te trayah
Arthashashtrang chaturthatu Vidya Hashtadashaiwataha”*

(Visnhnu Purana – 3.6.38-29)

Meaning 'Six' Vedangas (Shikshya, Kalpu, Vyakarana, Nirukta Chanda (rhyme) and Jyotish), 'four vedas' (Rik, yajur, Shama and Atharba Veda), Mimangsha, Nyaya, Purana and

Dharmashastra joining with these 'Fourteen Shastra' and the Ayurveda, Dhanurveda, Gandharbaveda and Arthashastra, we get the 'Ashtadasho' Vidya. So, religious holiness is found in Puranas, just like it is found in Veda and Vedantas. Veda is the expression of words coming out of the mouth of 'Ishrawara', just like this purana too is the expression of words that directly comes out of the mouth of 'Ishwara'.

This is the short analysis of the 'Fourvedas Fourteen Shastras' made on the basis of necessity of analysis of the Maha Puranas.

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