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NARA-NĀRĀYANA AS DESCRIBED IN THE PURĀNAS

By

Ram Shankar Bhattacharya

The Purānas speak highly of the twin sages Nara and Nārāyaṇa and show the uniqueness of their character by saying that they, unlike other gods, conquered Kāma without being arrogant or wrathful to him. Following pages embody a brief account of the life and activities of these two sages as described in the Purānas. That these two sages possess a highly glorified position in the field of Puranic lore may be known from a well-known verse (नारायण नमस्कृति नरे जैव नरेषतम्) read in the beginning of almost all the Purānas.

In the Purānas the word Naranārāyaṇa (containing the names of two sages) is, in many places, used in singular number, which shows intimate relation or constant companionship between these two sages. They are regarded as the two parts of one sattva (नारायण नर जैव सत्त्वेन द्विग्रीष्ठम्, Mbh. Udyoga p. 49). In the present article the word Naranārāyaṇa will usually be treated as one single name, unless there arises some necessity to mention the two names separately. We have hardly given any hyphen between the two names as there is no possibility of confusion in the names.

It should be clearly noted that Nārāyaṇa in this article is not the same as the god Viṣṇu or Nārāyaṇa. Here Nārāyaṇa is chiefly a sage though he is regarded as an anāśa (portion) or incarnation of Viṣṇu or even aspects or forms of Viṣṇu and is given such epithets as are usually given to Viṣṇu. There are however a considerable number of Puranic passages where the precise character of Nārāyaṇa (whether he is a sage or the same as God Viṣṇu) is not clearly discernible. As for example in the Puranic statement that Śrī, the daughter of Bhṛgu and Khyāti; was married with Nārāyaṇa, Nārāyaṇa is the God Viṣṇu as may be known from relevant Puranic passages. Again when the Purānas say that in the churning of ocean Nārāyaṇa assumed the form of Mohini, Nārāyaṇa is to be taken as the God Viṣṇu, but in the same incident when it is said that Nārāyaṇa appeared with Nara and fought against the demons, Nārāyaṇa is the sage Nārāyaṇa as is clear from the mention of Nara.

It is worth while to note the position of Nara-nārāyaṇa in the scheme of avatāras as conceived in the Gauḍīya school. According to this school these two sages belong to the class of lilāvatāras (who are twenty-four in number) and sometimes they are said to form one single avatāra. They are also regarded as persons showing the glory of dispassion (vairāgya). In the fourfold classification of avatāras (namely āveśa, prabhuva, vaihava and parāvastha) Nara and Nārāyaṇa fall under the vaihava class (See the Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta of Sanātana-govīmin and the Sankṣepabhaģavatāmṛta of Rūpagovīmin). According to the Sankṣepabhaģavatāmṛta, the four brothers Nara, Nārāyaṇa, Hari and Kṛṣṇa constitute one single avatāra (14).

Though some Purānas expressly state that Nara and Nārāyaṇa were of human forms (नरस्य रिश्यति, Sk. Badarikāśrama 8.19; see also D. Bhāg. 6.10.19-21, 30) and though words like muni, rṣi and the like are frequently used at the time of referring to them, yet it is reasonable to regard them as mythical, for they are said to be the offspring of Śādhya or Mūrti (the daughter of Dakṣa) and Dharma (born of Brahmā). The assertion that they appeared in the Cālciṣu manvantara also tends to prove the mythical character of these two sages.

Glorious position of Naranārāyaṇa

The highly exalted position of these two sages may be known from the statements of Puranic authors as given below:

1. These two sages are regarded as the incarnations or portions of Viṣṇu, or even Viṣṇu himself.
2. Epithets like prasānta, mahat, jñāsin, mahāmati, bhaktapravara, lokabhāvana and the like are frequently used for them. See Bhāg. 3.4.22; 11.4.6; Kālikā-p. 37.127; Br.Vai.p. 2.63.27-28; 4.22.48, etc.
3. Besides the general epithets like muni, rṣi, yogin, bhāgavata etc., more significant epithets are applied to them. They are regarded as paramahamsa-paramaguru in Bhāg. 5.19.11 and D. Bhāg. 8.11.2 and devar sis in Vāyu-p.61.83. Nārāyaṇa is said to be the best of munis as Kumāra (i.e. Sanatkumāra) is the best of brahmācārin (नारायणोऽन्नतं कुमारव ब्रह्मचारिग्न कृमाणा भ्र्मचारिज्ञाना भाग. 11.16.25).
4. The celibacy of these two sages has been praised in a lofty way in Bhāg. 3. 31. 37 saying that there is no other being who cannot be deluded...
by women (सल्लुपत्तुपयुुमु रोमन्विपितस्मी...पुणान। ।चौर्य नारायणेष्वो योजिन्येष्व मायाया}).

(5) The passages like नारायण नरसि शरण प्रक्षे (in Bhāg. 11. 7. 18) show that the two sages are regarded as capable of delivering people from the miseries of the mundane existence. Similarly, passages like अल्पप्राय प्रमादा (pramāda) may also be considered in this connection.

(6) The two eulogistic verses uttered at the birth of these two sages as given in Bhāg. 4. 1. 46-47 (such verses are not found at the birth of other sages) and Nārāda's song, directed to these two sages as given in Bhāg. 5. 19. 12-15 also point to their highly glorified position. The eulogies addressed to Nara-nārāyaṇa by various persons (see Bhāg. 4. 1. 56-59; 12. 8. 40-49 etc) may also be considered in this connection.

(7) The worship of Nārāyaṇa as shown in the Purāṇas is a proof positive of their deified character, see Bhāg. 5. 4. 5 (नारायण भक्ति वासुदेवपुजारी) There are āvāhana-mantras of these sages in V. Dh. U. 3. 106-96-97 and also mantras for worship in Bhāg. 5. 19. 11 (ॐ नमः भमते - - - नारायणाय- - ) and in D. Bh. āg. 8. 11. 2 (ॐ नमः भमते - - - )

Nārāyaṇa-two sādhya devas

The Purāṇas, expressly declare that Nara and Nārāyaṇa, the sons of Dharma, are sādhyas. It is also stated that Nārāyaṇa was made king or lord of the sādhya by king Pṛthu (नारायण हें सत्यानान्त, Vāyu-p. 30. 6; Brahmāṇḍa-p. 2. 8. 6). These clearly show that these two sages belong to the sādhya class. Since these two sages belong to the sādhya class, they are regarded as devavīs (Vāyu-p. 61. 83) (sādhya being one of the gana-devatās, see Amarakośa 1. 1. 10).

According to the Purāṇas the sādhya devas are the offspring of Dharma and Sādhya; they are twelve in number and they appeared in the Cākṣusā manvantara (Vāyu-p. 66. 14; 67.41; Matsya-p. 203. 10-12; 213. 11-12).

Parentage of Nārāyaṇa

Since Nārāyaṇa belongs to the sādhya class of beings and since this class is born of Sādhya (one of the daughters of Dakṣa) and Dharma, it is needless to say that Dharma and Sādhya were the parents of Nārāyaṇa. There are even express statements on this. As for example Sk. Revā 192.9-10 says that Dharma and Sādhya gave birth of Nara, Nārāyaṇa, Hari and Kṛṣṇa. The Purāṇas have little to say about Hari and Kṛṣṇa and it would be too much to assume any real connection of this Kṛṣṇa with Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa.

A different view about the name of the mother of Nārāyaṇa is found in the Bhāgavata, which seems to be followed by two Puranic works of Vaiṣṇava character. According to the Bhāgavata the name is Mūrti. That Mūrti is the name of the wife of Dharma is stated in the Purāṇas in various occasions.

There must be some reason for this difference in the name of the mother of Nārāyaṇa, especially when the view is not found in comparatively earlier Purāṇas. It seems that since the Bhāgavata is based on the Vaiṣṇava āgama, the present view must have been taken from some Agamic work. It is gratifying to note that the Bhāgavata view is found in the Sāttva-saṁhitā 2.12 (नारायणो नर ब्रजस्वरभिः धरमस दक्षुद्वम्येच्यूर्द्रः दर्शन) -Mūrti is the daughter of Dakṣa).

There is another point of difference in the Bhāgavata view. According to the Bhāgavata-p. Mūrti is the daughter of Śvāmabhava Dakṣa and Prastūti (4. 1. 49) while Sādhya is said to be the daughter of Prācetasā Dakṣa.

There is an important problem concerning the view of the Sāttvatasahhitā, which holds another view about the parentage of these sages. It says that Dharma and Ahirhā gave birth to Nara, Nārāyaṇa, Hari and Kṛṣṇa (12. 139).

The view is found in the Vāmana-p. also (भवं च त्व श्रीमानां बाल्यप्रसादिष्ठ्या वस, 2.12). Apparently this is a problem. But the Purāṇa itself in its later chapter says that Ahirhā, the wife of Dharma gave birth to four sons, namely Sanatkumāra, Sanatana, Sanaka and Sanandana who were devoted to yogaśāstra (34. 69-70 Cr. ed.). This shows either Ahirhā is another wife of Dharma, or this Dharma is different from Dharma, the father of Nārāyaṇa.

Sectarian views about the birth of Nārāyaṇa are also found in the Purāṇas. According to the Kālikā-p. Nara and Nārāyaṇa are born of the Nārasīra incarnation-Nara from the human part and Nārāyaṇa from the lionine part (30. 124-126). As to why the two sages were connected with these two parts an explanation may be hazarded: it is quite natural to associate Nara with the human part, for Nara means a man. Since
Nārāyaṇa is depicted as more powerful than Nara in Puranic stories. Nārāyaṇa seems to have been associated with the lionine part.

In the Avantiḥkṣaṇa (3.29-30) of the Skanda-p., these two sages are said to come out from the blood of Śiva. This view seems to be based on the warrior-character of these sages as depicted in the Purāṇas; see Skanda, Badarikāśrama 8.19; Nārādyā-p. 2. 67, 66-67; D. Bhāg. 4.9 and Vāmana-p. 7.39-8.32 (battle between Prahlāda and Nārāyaṇa).

Relation between Nara and Nārāyaṇa and their characteristics

According to the Purāṇas Nara is the younger brother of Nārāyaṇa; he is the companion as well as the helper of Nārāyaṇa in his deeds; the name Nara has some basis. The Purāṇas sometimes describe them as warriors. Bodily characteristics of these sages are stated in some Purāṇas. They are described as wearing skin of the black antelope, as possessing matted hair, as holding water-jars, stuffs, rosaries of beads, as having pavitra in hand etc. According to the Bhāgavata and Padma Purāṇas the complexion of Nara and Nārāyaṇa is white and black respectively, while according to the Viṣṇudharmottara the complexion of these two sages is śyāma and nila respectively. Again, while according to the Bhāgavata-p. the sages have four arms each, according to the Viṣṇudharmottara Nara and Nārāyaṇa have two and four arms respectively. The reason for the difference in the views of these two Purāṇas is difficult to determine. The V. Dh. U. seems to follow the tradition of artistes. Is this tradition partly different from the tradition of the Purāṇas?

Place of austerities practised by Nārāyaṇa

Almost all Puranas declare that Nara-nārāyaṇa practised austerities at Badari, sometimes called Badarī-āśrama, Badari-āśrama-māṇḍala. Badarikā or Badarikāśrama. The place is called so on account of its having a forest of Badari trees. It is situated on the hill called Gandhamadana in the Himalayan region. The hill seems to have two peaks. The two sages are said to remain there for a long time or for the whole life as the epithets śivānirūpa (Mbh. An u sā sana-p. 167. 43), and ākṣamādāsā (Nārādyā-p. 2. 67. 5) indicate. Sages are said to repair to this place to meet Nara- nārāyaṇa; see Mbh. Santi-p. 339. 111.

This place of practising penance by Nara-nārāyaṇa came to be called Nārāyaṇa-sthāna, Nārāyaṇālālaya and Nārāyaṇa-āsrāma for obvious reasons. Badari is also called by the name Viśalā (Skanda Badarikāśrama 1.59). It is also said that it is called Muktīpuradā, Yogasiddhi, Viśalā and Badarikāśrama in the four yugas respectively (Sk. Badarikāśrama 1.57). Badari is said to be a seat of Devi in the name Urvāśi 7. 30. 79. The Urvāśi-sāngama-tīrtha is situated here (Nārādyā-p. 2. 67. 76) For a charming description of Badari, see Kālikā-p. 32. 34-37.

A few other places are also connected with Nārāyaṇa. Hirayāsaṁgaśvara is said to be a place of practising austerities by these sages in Padma-p. 6. 135. 5-6. It is situated on (or near) the Sābhamatā river (modern Sabarmati).

Similarly Viṣṇusaras is said to be a seat of Nārāyaṇa (Padma-p. 1. 3. 61).

Performance of austerities by Nārāyaṇa

The Purāṇas describe the practice of austerities by Nārāyaṇa in various ways. On account of the performance of tapāsas such epithets as rājasya, tātā, tātrit, and the like are given to these sages. The Purāṇas further inform us that the sages performed austerities by remaining unmarried (i.e. by following the vow of celibacy), and that the purpose of practising austerities was to attain liberation or to propagate dharma and to establish peace for people. It is gratifying to note that according to the Bhāgavata 5. 19. 9 and Śiva-p. 4. 19. 1 it is Bhāratavarsa where the sages performed austerities and the sages will continue their practice till the end of the kalpa (i.e. Śvetavarahaskalpa).

From the Puranic descriptions of austerities it appears that the austerities were awful, severe, acute and violent, that the sages remained without food and drink for long periods of time, that they were not disturbed by lust, greed, grief, etc. and that they controlled their senses and placed the mind on ātman. Miraculous powers resulting from their austerities have also been stated in some Purāṇas (Sk. Revā 192. 13b-16). The Śatavatā-saṁhitā on which the story of Nara-nārāyaṇa as given in the Bhāgavata-p. is based, also speaks of several austerities of these sages (P. XVIII.4.13a-13b).
Acts of Naranārayaṇa

A few acts of Naranārayaṇa are described in the Purāṇas. It is needless to say that in the Puranic accounts of these acts there are differences in details. As for example in the episode of the churning of the ocean some Purāṇas simply speak of the presence of Naranārayaṇa, while others describe the fight of these sages with the demons. There is no definite means to determine whether the mention of the fight is a later augmentation or the non-mention of the fight is the result of condensation.

It may be easily observed that there are such epithets of these two sages in the Purāṇas as are based on various acts performed by them. As for example the epithet अनेकत्विनी रंगन्ते (Mbh. Udyoga 196. 12) is based on the victories of these two sages in battles with demons.

From the Puranic statements about the nature of Naranārayaṇa it appears that these two sages chose that path which, in the words of Gitā, is known as lokasaṅgraha. (the guidance of people).

It is remarkable to note that the Devībhaṅgavata put up some questions about the reason for the various acts done by Nara-nārayaṇa in 4.1.12b-20 and 4.10.1-1637. It is the curse of Bhṛgu that is said to be the reason for assuming various incarnations by Viṣṇu (D. Bhāg. 4.10.29). The incident of the curse is elaborately described in 4.10.32-8. The curse of Bhṛgu is stated in other Purāṇas also (भृगुवधर्मचलनेष्व मानव्यम् मानुषी । तनु: । कुर्मा-प. 1. 23. 72 Cr. ed.).

In the present article no attempt will be made to take up a comparative study of the Puranic description of these episodes for reasons of space. Here we will simply give Puranic references along with very brief accounts of the episodes.

Following acts of Naranārayaṇa are chiefly described in the Purāṇas:

1. Victory over Kāma and creation of Urvāśī

These two (two aspects of one single act) are the most meritorious acts of Naranārayaṇa (especially of Nārāyaṇa). The Purāṇas describe this incident in a highly eloquent manner and remark that Nārāyaṇa conquered Kāma without being enraged to him, thus showing his supreme position in comparison to other divinities (Bhāg. 11. 4. 11).

It is said that while Nara and Nārāyaṇa were practising austerities in the Gandhamādana mountain, Indra became afraid of them thinking that they would conquer his kingdom (heaven). Consequently he sent Kāma with some apsarases to disturb the sages. The sages, instead of being disturbed, welcomed Kāma and the apsarases calmly with a composed mind. Nārāyaṇa, with a view to showing his indifference to physical beauty, created from his thigh an apsaras called Urvāśī (as she was born of the ṛṇa, thigh, of Nārāyaṇa) whose superb beauty excelled that of the apsarases (who had come there with Kāma to delude him) and graciously presented her to Indra who wanted to distract him from performing austerities. The apsarases and Cupid became ashamed of their behaviour; they came back to Indra and informed him that the sages had no intention to occupy his kingdom.38

The episode with differences in details is stated in several Purāṇas; see D. Bhāg. 4. 5-7; Matsya-p. 61. 21-26; Bhāg. 11. 4. 7-15 (here the name Nārāyaṇa is absent though the sage is called dharmasuta), Vāmanā-p. 6. 1-7. 20 (Cr. ed.), Padma-p. Sṛṣṭi 2. 23-28; V. Dh. U. Kh. 1, Ch. 129; 3. 35. 1-5a; Sk. Revā 192-193; Sk. Badarikāśrama 17. 62-65; Sk. Avanti, Chap. 8; Viṣṇudharma 102-103 (see Studies in the Upapurāṇas, Vol. I, p. 129).

(1A) in connection with the above episode there is one remarkable incident in the description given in the Revākhaṇḍa of the Skanda-p. it is the viśvarūpapadarśana (the vision of the universal form) of the apsarases (Ch. 193) through the power of Nārāyaṇa.

2) Fight with the demon Prahlāda

Prahlāda once came to Naimiṣāraṇya and he saw there Nara and Nārāyaṇa practising austerities though they held bows and arrows. The dialogue between the sages and Prahlāda gave rise to a fight and at last Prahlāda was defeated by Naranārayaṇa and was ordered to go to his kingdom; See Vāmanā-p. 7. 39-8.72 and D. Bhāg. 4. 7. 18-4. 16; see also D. Bhāg. 4. 16. 17-19.

3) Fight with the king Dambhodbhava

Dambhodbhava was highly proud of his power and prowess and being advised by Nārada he came to Badari and requested Naranārayaṇa to fight with him. The king was defeated by Nara and came back to his capital; See Mbh. Udyoga-p. 96.5-39. The incident was known to Kautilya (भृगुवधर्मचलनेष्व मानव्यम् मानुषी । तनु: । कुर्मा-प. 1. 23. 72 Cr. ed.). A very brief account of the incident may be found in the Jayamaṅgalā comm.39 on Arthaśāstra, which evidently seems to have summarized the description given in the Udyoga-p.
(4) Naranarayana's worship of Siva

While Naranarayana was practising austerities at Badari, Siva came to the Kedaralinga and told the sages to receive boons from him. The sages requested Siva to remain in the Kedaralinga. Siva agreed and he remained in the linga in the form of jyotis; see Siva-p. 4. 19. 6-7.

(5) Naranarayana bringing devas to the world

Nara and Nara used to bring the devas and devarśis of the Janaloka to the world through their power of austerities; see Kalikā-p. 34. 25-28.40

(6) Protection of yajña by Naranarayana

Seeing the wrathful Siva, yajña fled to the Naranarayanāśrama and Siva, holding a bow and arrows, followed yajña. When Nārāyaṇa pressed Siva's neck (kaṇṭhapidana) Siva was overcome with fear (vihvala) and yajña fled to the heaven (div); see V. Dharma-U. 1. 235. 4-11.

(7) Naranarayana's fight with the demons in the incident of the churning of the Kṣiroda ocean

In this incident Nārāyaṇa and Nara appeared for the devas and fought with the demons by using discus (cakra) and arrows respectively (Matsya-p. 250. 25-28). (The mention of the use of arrows of Nara is worth noticing, for Nara's association with weapons has been expressly stated in the Purāṇas). See also V. Dharma-U. 1. 43. 30 ff.

(8) Giving boon to Mārkaṇḍeya

In Bhag. 12. 8.6-9.34 sage Mārkaṇḍeya is said to practise austerities somewhere in the northern slope of the mountain Himālaya. When his mind was engrossed in Lord, He appeared before him in the form of Naranarayana (Mārkaṇḍeya's eulogy to Naranarayana is given in 8.40-49). Being asked by Nārāyaṇa to take a boon from him, Mārkaṇḍeya prayed Him to show his māya. Mārkaṇḍeya's vision of māya is described in detail in 9. 10-34.

Teachings and doctrines of Naranarayana

Views of Naranarayana are found in two forms in the Purāṇas—in the form of teachings, or instructions or advices given to sages etc. and in the form of doctrines (mostly on philosophical matters) ascribed to those sages. A modest list of Puranic passages containing these two kinds of views is given here. We are not going to take up any kind of discussion on these views here for reason of space.

In this connection it is to be noted that the views of the sage Nārāyaṇa are not to be confounded with the views of God Nārāyaṇa. This distinction is however not always easily discernible. Even the use of the word r̥ṣi with Nārāyaṇa is not always the sure sign in taking Nārāyaṇa as the sage. An attempt is made here to give those Puranic passages only that seem most probably to belong to the sage Nārāyaṇa (son of Dharma).

Bhāgavata-p.

1. Mentioning Nara-nārāyaṇa as the sons of Dharma and his wife Mūrti, the Purāṇa tells us that the sages preached that kind of karman which leads to the knowledge of the self and further inform that they themselves practised it (वैभागवतस्वयम् चतर्भुअनि, 11. 4. 6.).

2. It is said that Nārāyaṇa, the dear companion of Nara, spoke to Nārada that pure wisdom which cannot be attained easily. This knowledge may be attained by those embodied beings that bathed themselves in the dust of the lotus-feet of the devotees of the Lord, who claim nothing as their own;

...5. The sage realized the nature of... (7. 6. 27)

3. Nārada is said to proclaim sanātana-dharma which he heard from Nārāyaṇa, the son of Dharma and the daughter of Daḵśa (7. 11. 5-6).

The discourse is in five chapters (11-15), dealing with āśrama-dharma. Chap. 11 has a very brief account of Varṇadharma and sāmānyadharma, and chap. 15 has a good number of verses on mokṣadharma.

4. From Bhag. 10. 87. 4-11 it appears that the views proclaimed in the Śrutistuti verses (10. 87. 14-41) were originally stated to Nārada by Nārāyaṇa who dwelt in the Nārāyaṇāśrama i. e. Badarikāśrama.

5. The sage Nārāyaṇa is said to speak out the Bhāgavata-p. to Krṣṇa-dvapāyana and Nārada (Bhag. 12. 4. 41).

6. The sage Mārkaṇḍeya was taught by Hari in the form Naranarayana (Bhag. 12. 8. 32-9. 7). (The sage realized the nature of māya through the grace of the Lord).
Deviḥāgavatā

When the apsārās became love-smitten to Nārāyaṇa (after the creation of Urvāṇī by him from his thigh) Nārāyaṇa promised to become their husband when he would be born as Kṣṇa in the 28th Dvāpāra (4. 6; 4. 17). In Chap. 17 while talking with apsārās, Nārāyaṇa spoke about the erotic sentiment-(ṛṅgārārasya) and its sthāyī-bhāva( the last feeling) and declared कर्तव्य विना कार्य न भवेद (4. 17. 11-12; no effect comes into existence without a cause).

From 8. 16 to the end of the 8th Skandha there is a dialogue between the sage Nārāyaṇa (speaker) and Nārāda (Vyāsa here reproduces to Janamejaya what Nārāyaṇa said to Nārada). Here the well-known Puranic tales are told, along with the geography of the earth, method of Devi-worship etc.

The ninth skandha is also in the same dialogue (in 50 chapters). Here is the description of the five forms of Prākti (namely Durgā, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī, Śāvitṛ and Rādhā) and the five parts of Prākti (namely Gaṅga, Tulasi, Manasā, Śaśi and Maṅgalacandī) with necessary details. The tenth skandha also is in the same dialogue. It deals with the worship of Devi; the story of the Vindhya mountain, lives of some of the Manus and the killing of the demon Aruṇa by Devi. The eleventh skandha (in the same dialogue) deals with sadacāra elaborately describing Tantric and Vedic processes. The twelfth skandha (in the same dialogue) deals with Gāyatrī, dikṣā, Devī Bhūvaneśvari etc.

It appears that in these chapters the author of the Purāṇa made Nārāyaṇa speak chiefly about the popular themes of his times. Such long dialogues dealing with heterogeneous matters are usually not meant to present the views actually held by the speaker. In such dialogues the names of the speaker and the hearer are given to show authoritativeness and antiquity of the topics discussed.

Skanda-p.

In the Revākhaṇḍa the incident of creating Urvāṇī is given with much detail. At the time of speaking to the apsārās Nārāyaṇa spoke about the nature of paramātman, jīvas, and the world (192. 70-81 and 86). The views propounded here are: omnipresence of Viṣṇu-Vāsudeva, creation of all creatures by paramātman; samadṛśī (the eye of evenness) to all is the saṁyagdrṣī (right knowledge); in reality there is no difference in the world.

Varāḥa-p.

Nara said that Nārāyaṇa who was loka-mārgadrāk (48. 16) and who had practised austerities with me in the Badari tīrtha, assumed the forms of various avatarās (Matsya, Kūrmā etc.) and performed various acts (48. 16-26).

Brahmavaivarta-p.

The whole of the second Khanda (called Prakṛtikhaṇḍa) of this Purāṇa is in the dialogue of Nārāyaṇa (speaker) and Nārāda. (Here Nārāyaṇa is the sage of the Badari tīrtha; see 1. 29. 1). The subjects are mostly popular tales. As this Purāṇa is apocryphal, it is needless to mention the topics of this dialogue here.

The third Gaṇapatikhaṇḍa is also in the same dialogue.

Viṣṇudharmottara-p.

The sage Nārāyaṇa instructed Nārāda about the method of worshipping Vāsudeva in Kh. 3, Chap. 352.

Mahābhārata

In the story of Dambhoḍabhava (Udyoga, Ch. 96) there are no verses bearing upadeśas on some philosophical matters, yet there are a few verses on proper duties of a Kṣatriya king (श्रवण्यो भव दर्मालया...अविदितव बलबलम्, 34a-37).

In Śanti-p. 61 we find some verses of Nārāyaṇa (Nārāyaṇa-gitam, 13) on the duties of four stages of life (āśramadharma) (verses 13-21). This Nārāyaṇa seems to be the same Nārāyaṇa as the expression अविदितव बलबलम् उपासना suggests. This expression serves no purpose if Nārāyaṇa is taken as God.

There is a dialogue between the sage Nārāyaṇa (speaker) and Nārāda in Śanti-p. Chaps. 334. 7-345. 28. In this dialogue we find teachings of Nārāyaṇa along with tales etc., see 343. 28-45 (about kṣetra, avyakta etc.; it is called guhya-samuddāsa in 334. 45); 339. 18-76 (God, the three guṇas, the four vīyās, māyā, the Śvetadvipa and its inhabitants, Brahmā); Ch. 344. 1-24 (teachings of Nara-nārāyaṇa on the glory of Vāsudeva).

The Śanti-p. referred to the philosophical views of the sage Nārāyaṇa in more than one place:

(i) प्रकृतिलक्षण धर्मगुण्डर्माणयोगशब्दवीति (217.2)
(ii) प्रकृतिलक्षणम्बें धर्मी नारायणास्मातः (347.91)
(iii) प्रकाशं भवन्तेन्तुरित्वार्ययोगुन्तम्
भूतानामयुक्तमायेः वनगार जातो गति:॥ (217.38)

The illuminating knowledge (prakāśam) is depicted in 217.37 which speaks of vikāra, prakṛti and the eternal puruṣa. Thus it is clear that Nārāyaṇa is also the promulgate of Sāṅkhya.

In passing we want to quote an upadeśa of Nārāyaṇa given to warriors (quoted in a non-Puranic work) with a view to encouraging them to embrace death in the battle-field:

यदि समरमात्रां नालि गृहोऽभ्यासिति गृहामत्तेष्वत: प्रयत्नम्
अयं मरणसाध्यं जन्तोऽक्षिमिति गृह मलिते यस्य: कुर्ष्मम्॥ (quoted in Nitimayukha, p. 105).

(O warriors), if you can escape the fear of death by leaving fighting in the battle field, it is reasonable to go elsewhere; but if death is inevitable to all creatures, then how is it that you defile your fame by running away from the battle-field.

(It appears that the verse is quoted from some work which was ascribed to the warrior-sage Nārāyaṇa).

Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna as incarnations of Nārāyaṇa and Nara

A remarkable declaration is found in several Purāṇas and the Mahābhārata that Kṛṣṇa and the Pāṇḍava Arjuna of the Dvāpara-yuga are the incarnations of Nārāyaṇa and Nara respectively. This identification seems to have some Agamic basis as may be known from the statement of Jivagovāmin: अत्र्युस्तु दुःखजेत्रे कृष्णो नारायणय वास्तु इवामपवर्भवेतु तु भीमेन दूर-प्रत्येकपेक्षाम्, Kramasandarbha on Bhāgavata-p. 2. 1. 57).

The Purāṇas inform us that Viṣṇu's assuming the bodies of Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna is caused by the curse of the sage Bhṛgu (पूर्वो: शापस्थाना, D. Bhāg. 4. 17. 23) and that this curse is the result of their prārabdha karman (momentum of past actions).

Puranic works are unanimous in asserting that the purpose of assuming the bodies of Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna by these two sages is to remove the burden of the earth (पृथवीरक्षण) 43

The reason for taking Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna as the incarnations of Nārāyaṇa and Nara respectively is not difficult to seek. It is, according to us, the actively following of the path of karmayoga for lokasāṅgraha (chiefly by Kṛṣṇa and secondarily by his follower-companion Arjuna) which is said to have been promulgated and taught by Nārāyaṇa and Nara in the days of yore.

Since Kṛṣṇa was conceived as an aṁśa or an incarnation of Viṣṇu, or even as Viṣṇu himself and Arjuna as his devoted disciple and a dear friend and since both of them fought against unrighteousness and acted to establish dharma, it was quite natural to consider them as the incarnations of Nārāyaṇa and Nara respectively. The sāyana (dark-green) and nīla or kṛṣṇa (black) complexion of Naranārāyaṇa (as stated in the Purāṇas) seems to strengthen this notion.

It may be further stated that since the entering in the householder's stage by Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna was not in consonance with the character of Nārāyaṇa and Nara as they were life-long celebates, a story was framed by Puranic authors to justify the marriage of Kṛṣṇa (incarnation of the elder brother Nārāyaṇa) with many women (Nārāyaṇa's promise to marry the apsarases in some future birth). The marriage of Kṛṣṇa justifies the marriage of Arjuna who was a little younger than he.

An esoteric explanation of the relation between Nara (Arjuna, the embodied self) and Nārāyaṇa (Kṛṣṇa, the supreme self) is also given in the Br. Dh. P.44 Here the statement तत्रकार्यवस्त्र तत्तत्तात्त्व तिन्: (1. 30. 34) shows the importance of the role played chiefly by Kṛṣṇa and secondarily by Arjuna in the Mahābhārata war and the incidents connected with it. (Cp. the well-known saying that the Mahābhārata is the kārṇa-veda).

About the incarnations of Naranārāyaṇa in the Dvāpara yuga the Purāṇas are found to contain two such views as are more or less different from the above view.

1. It is stated in Sk. Avanti-kaṇḍa (27. 107-109) that Śāndipani, the teacher of Kṛṣṇa, declared that Kṛṣṇa and his elder brother Balarāma were the incarnations of Nārāyaṇa and Nara respectively. As this view is not in other Purāṇas it is quite reasonable to hold that the view is simply a revised form of the previous view. Since Arjuna was not the brother of Kṛṣṇa (while Nara was the brother of Nārāyaṇa) Balarāma was given the place of Arjuna (though he was elder than Kṛṣṇa). As Balarāma was fond of quarrel and battle, it was natural to conceive him as the incarnation of the warrior-like Nara.

2. The Vāyu-p. (66. 61) says that Indra and Viṣṇu appeared as Nara and Nārāyaṇa in the Vaivasvata manvantara.45 This passage undoubtedly refers to Arjuna (Nara) and Kṛṣṇa (Nārāyaṇa) as is
indicated by the expression 'vaivasvata manvantara' (Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna appeared in the Vaivasvata manvantara). This conception seems to have some basis. Since Arjuna is regarded as the son of Indra, the Purāṇa mentions Indra as appearing as Nara, who is said to appear as Arjuna. In fact both Nara and Nārāyaṇa are regarded as the two forms of one and the same Viṣṇu.

**Date of the appearance of Nārāyaṇa**

Only a few Puranic passages speak of the date of the appearance of the sages Nara and Nārāyaṇa which are going to be shown here.

Some Purāṇas use the word *turīya* (fourth) while referring to the incarnation of Nārāyaṇa. Apparently it means that Nārāyaṇa appeared after the appearance of the first three incarnations.

A careful study of the Puranic passages reveals that here the word *turīya* is not used to show chronological order, it simply shows the order of enumeration (*gaṇanākrama*) as has been rightly remarked by the commentator Śrīdhara on Bhāgavata 1.3.6 (Prayāttītāyāsādya nityeśamsā-vibhaktā)!

The Br. Dh. P., at the time of dealing with the incarnations of Viṣṇu, uses the word *tatas* ('after that') while speaking of the appearance of Nārāyaṇa: ततो भूतसप्तकर्ता नरो नारायणस्य (2.11.63), i.e. Nārāyaṇa appeared after the Varāha incarnation which is preceded by the two other incarnations, namely Nārada and Brahmācārīn (i.e. Sanatkumāra). This however does not help us decide the date precisely.

It is gratifying to note that some Purāṇas mention a particular period of the appearance of Nārāyaṇa. According to these Purāṇas the two sages appeared, with other Śādyā deyas, in the sixth manvantara called Cākṣuṣa. It is also stated that these two sages appeared in other manvantaras also. It is needless to say that in some places the printed readings of the Puranic verses given in the footnote are so corrupt that it becomes difficult to understand them fully, though the general meaning is more or less clear.

It may also be noted that the Mahābhārata informs us that Nara and Nārāyaṇa began to practise austerities when Prajāpati Dakṣa performed the sacrifice (Śānti-p. 342. 107-108). That Dakṣa performed the sacrifice in the Cākṣuṣa manvantara is stated in some Purāṇas.

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1. Bhāg. 5.19.11; Śīva-p. 11.2; Nārāyaṇa-p. 216.2, 38; Bhāgavat-p. 1.1.18.
2. Cf. Bhāg.-p. 5.19.9 (अन्वन्त नारायणेष्व) Where Nārāyaṇa is taken as a single name of Bhagavat. Cf. Śrīdhara’s remarks: कथा जूठेतुः एकादशनं विस्माति (on Bhāg. 1.3.9).
3. Similarly Sanaka and three other sages (known as युजनाः as सद्या occurs in each of these names) are said to constitute one Avatāra (see Sakhāpabbaṅgaśvāntāma 14).
4. It is needless to say that both these names are found in other fields also. As for example there is a Nār in the dynasty of Pithu (Viṣṇu-p. 2.138) and of Pūru (Bhāg. 9.21.1). Similarly Nārāyaṇa is found to be the name of several persons one of the prominent example being the son of Ajāmila (Bhāg. 6.1.24).
5. Vaiśeṣikī (V. Dh. 1. 129, 2; D. Bhāg. 4. 1. 14); Śānti (Bhāg. 4. 1. 59); Avatāra (Br. Vai. p. 4. 22. 48); The Viṣṇudharma describes them as extremely small of Vāsudeva (Studies in the Upapurāṇas, vol. I, p. 133).
6. Bhāg. 1. 3. 9; 3. 4. 22; 5. 19. 11; D. Bhāg. 4. 1. 17; 6. 12. 12; V. Dh. U. 1. 129. 2; Br. Vai. p. 4. 22. 48; Kālikī- p. 34. 25-26; Bhāgavat-p. 217.2, 38; Bhāgavat-p. 217. 2.
7. On account of the life-long observance of celibacy Nārāyaṇa told the apsarasas (who came to delude him at the bidding of Indra) who were love-struck to him that as he could not marry them in his present life he would marry them in the 28th Dvāpara assuming the form Kṛṣṇa: अववाय कालार्की। कृष्णाकालार्की। | आयामणि कर्तव्यमेतः सत्यायां दर्शनकरः (D. Bhāg. 4. 17. 9).
8. It is interesting to note that the Brahmāṇḍa-p. speaks of the characteristics of a stone (filī) called Nārāyaṇa:

   नारायणी देवी: शोभकर: वृक्षोपन:।
   तनासरवस्त्रित्वा: वर्षसंब्रह्मित्वादः।

(quoted in Prāṇatoṣṭīni, p. 353). The Nārādyā-p. also speaks of the Nārāyaṇa filī (along with four other) in the Badarikṣetra in 2. 67. 29.
9. Sākyas प्रभुपालिहृतेऽशष्ठिस्य (V. Dh. U. 1. 129, 2); युजनाः Nārāyaṇa: साध्या (Sk. Prabhāsa 19. 93); in Vāmanī–p. 8.5 and 8.29 the word *sādhyā* refers to Nārāyaṇa. Afterwards *sādhyā* came to be used conventionally for these two sages; see Nārādyā-p. 2. 6. 75 where *sādhyā* refers to Nārāyaṇa.
10. Sādyā: सायसस्वत: स्वतः (Matsya-p. 203. 10); see also Matsya-p. 5. 17; युजन: सायसस्वतः (Garuḍa-p. 1. 6. 26; Saurā-p. 28. 6; Kūṃra-p. 1. 15. 8 cr. ed; Śīva-p. 5. 31. 20; Brahma-p. 3.30).
11. Some important pieces of information about the sādhyā devas are found in the Purāṇas. They are said to appear in other manvantaras also. It is not necessary to deal with this matter here.

12. The names of ten daughters are: Śakuntā, Tārakeśa, Bhutiya, Pārvatī, Sīvalī, Surēśa, Śrīmaṇḍavā, Pārśu, Vīra, and Śrīraja; see Matsya 203; Brahma 3.29; Vaiṣṇava 2.6.6-7; Caruja 1.6.24; Kūrma-p. 1.15.7 Ch. ed.; Sk. Revā 192.8-9. There are slight variations in these names as read in the Purāṇas.

13. Narānāryāṇa is usually described as born of Dharma; mention of Sādhyā as the mother is found in a few places. The word Dākṣaśayī (for the mother) simply means 'the daughter of Dākṣa'; it may be sādhyā or Mūrti. According to a few Purāṇas the name is to be decided with the help of the context. Mark the following passages: Puruṣas (D. Bhāg. 4:1.12); Śrīnāraṇāyanīya D. Bhāg. 4:16.5; Śrīnāraṇāyanīya D. Bhāg. 1.4.6.10; Māyā śākṣyotu, Śrīnāraṇāyanīya Śrīnāraṇāyanīya (V. D. U. 1.129.2); Śrīnāraṇāyanīya Śrīnāraṇāyanīya (Bhāg. 1.3.9; here kālā means part, i.e. the husband, whose proper name is not mentioned); Puruṣas (Br. Vai. 4.22.48). Dharma married ten daughters of Dākṣa and in them he gave birth to four sons Nara and others (D. Bhāg. 4:3.5-9 to 15; there is no mention of the name of the wife of Dharma); Puruṣas (D. Bhāg. 4:1.4.10.1); Puruṣas (Bhāg. 4:22.31); see also Br. Vai. 1.1.59-61 (Bhūṣaṇ Vai. Narāyaṇa-p.); Padma-p. 5.22.23-24; tatha. maṇiṣya páramatra Mundanagāvaya. nānā puruṣas (Bhāg. 4:22.31).

14. Devībhagavata 4:9 b-15 and Vaiśṇava-p. 6.1-2 Ch. ed. say that both Harī and Kṛṣṇa were engaged in yoga-practice. These two sages accepted house holdership as has been remarked by Rūpāgavāmī-परśु (Bhāg. 3.7.6); Bhāg. 3b-4a). Puruṣas, Bhāg. 4:1.4.6; Śrīnāraṇāyanīya Śrīnāraṇāyanīya (Bhāg. 4.1.52); Śrīnāraṇāyanīya śākṣyotu (Bhāg. 7.11.6; here Dākṣaśayī must be Mūrti). Puruṣas, Bhāg. 7.11.6; here Dākṣaśayī must be Mūrti. Bhāg. 3.7.6). Mūrti is read here with a longi. Readers should carefully note the similarity of the verses of the Bhāgavata and the Sātvata-saṅhita. It appears that the verse of the Sātvata-saṅhita (or a similar verse of any other Āgamic work is) imitated by the author of the Bhāgavata. That Mūrti is one of the wives of Dharma is stated in later Purāṇas; see Kālī-p. 20.122-12.

15. Bhāg. 4:3.5 b-15 and Vaiśṇava-p. 6.1-2 Ch. ed. say that both Harī and Kṛṣṇa were engaged in yoga-practice. These two sages accepted house holdership as has been remarked by Rūpāgavāmī-परśु (Bhāg. 3.7.6); Bhāg. 3b-4a). Puruṣas, Bhāg. 4:1.4.6; Śrīnāraṇāyanīya Śrīnāraṇāyanīya (Bhāg. 4.1.52); Śrīnāraṇāyanīya śākṣyotu (Bhāg. 7.11.6; here Dākṣaśayī must be Mūrti). Bhāg. 3.7.6). Mūrti is read here with a longi. Readers should carefully note the similarity of the verses of the Bhāgavata and the Sātvata-saṅhita. It appears that the verse of the Sātvata-saṅhita (or a similar verse of any other Āgamic work is) imitated by the author of the Bhāgavata. That Mūrti is one of the wives of Dharma is stated in later Purāṇas; see Kālī-p. 20.122-12.

16. Bhāg. 4:3.5 b-15 and Vaiśṇava-p. 6.1-2 Ch. ed. say that both Harī and Kṛṣṇa were engaged in yoga-practice. These two sages accepted house holdership as has been remarked by Rūpāgavāmī-परśु (Bhāg. 3.7.6); Bhāg. 3b-4a). Puruṣas, Bhāg. 4:1.4.6; Śrīnāraṇāyanīya Śrīnāraṇāyanīya (Bhāg. 4.1.52); Śrīnāraṇāyanīya śākṣyotu (Bhāg. 7.11.6; here Dākṣaśayī must be Mūrti). Bhāg. 3.7.6). Mūrti is read here with a longi. Readers should carefully note the similarity of the verses of the Bhāgavata and the Sātvata-saṅhita. It appears that the verse of the Sātvata-saṅhita (or a similar verse of any other Āgamic work is) imitated by the author of the Bhāgavata. That Mūrti is one of the wives of Dharma is stated in later Purāṇas; see Kālī-p. 20.122-12.

17. Though this view is not found in other Purāṇas, yet it was well-known to the scholars of modern times. John Dowson in his Dictionary on Hindu Mythology refers to this view (sons of Dharma and Ahīṁsā, s. v. Nara-nārāyaṇa). According to Dr. Bhandarkar the name Ahīṁsā is significant for it shows the introduction of a new system of religion (Viṣṇuṣvāṃśa Viṣṇuṣvāṃśa p. 33).

18. It is to be noticed that the name of Nararaṇa as described in the Purāṇas (Mbh. Udyoga 46:40).


20. This view has been remarked by Puruṣas (Bhāg. 1.4.6); Bhāg. 4:16.5; and in them he gave birth to four sons: Nara and others (D. Bhāg. 4:3.5-9 to 15; there is no mention of the name of the wife of Dharma); Puruṣas (D. Bhāg. 4:22.31).

21. It appears that the verse of the Bhāgavata and the Sātvata-saṅhita (or a similar verse of any other Āgamic work is) imitated by the author of the Bhāgavata. That Mūrti is one of the wives of Dharma is stated in later Purāṇas; see Kālī-p. 20.122-12.

22. Bhāg. 4:3.5 b-15 and Vaiśṇava-p. 6.1-2 Ch. ed. say that both Harī and Kṛṣṇa were engaged in yoga-practice. These two sages accepted house holdership as has been remarked by Rūpāgavāmī-परśु (Bhāg. 3.7.6); Bhāg. 3b-4a). Puruṣas, Bhāg. 4:1.4.6; Śrīnāraṇāyanīya Śrīnāraṇāyanīya (Bhāg. 4.1.52); Śrīnāraṇāyanīya śākṣyotu (Bhāg. 7.11.6; here Dākṣaśayī must be Mūrti). Bhāg. 3.7.6). Mūrti is read here with a longi. Readers should carefully note the similarity of the verses of the Bhāgavata and the Sātvata-saṅhita. It appears that the verse of the Sātvata-saṅhita (or a similar verse of any other Āgamic work is) imitated by the author of the Bhāgavata. That Mūrti is one of the wives of Dharma is stated in later Purāṇas; see Kālī-p. 20.122-12.
27. The identification of Gandhamadana. It is identified with a part of the Rudra situated.

28. The identification of Gandhamadana is also connected with that part on which the river Alakananda flows.

29. Gandhamadana is called Naranarayanaasthana in Vīṣṇu-p. 5. 37.23-33; Nāraka-vasanān, vādavāsī (Mbh. 156.14; see also Vana-p. 177.8-9). Vādavaṁ... nāra-p. (Bhāg. 9.3.36; mark the non-use of Nara in the name; a similar use is found in Bhāg 10.87-5 and Sk. Badarikāstama 2. 31-32. see also Bhāg. 10.52.4; 9.1.31; Matsya-p. 61. 21; see also Padma-p. 5. 22.23-24. The Gandhamadana hill is called Nārāyana-giri (Sk. Revā 194. 33-34). Thus hill is said to be the abode of Kimpurāṣa (Mbh. Vana-p. 158. 38).

30. One of them is the Urvāṣika (see Vāra-p. 141. Cr. ed.). There is difference of opinion about the identification of Gandhamadana. It is identified with a part of the Rudra Himālaya, or with a part of Kailāsa range, or with that part on which Badarikāstama is situated. Usually it is identified with that part of Himālaya through which the river Alakanandatrava flows.

31. The identification of Gandhamadana is also connected with that part on which the river Alakananda flows.

32. See Kāli-k. p. 32. 33a-37 (dhwāsā bhoota-sukalakārābhāvonāsī (191) tvā-khāya-sūrya śiva-bhukṣum-nirvākāsam kārīkāvīmaṇḍīloka-gāyitram (191)).

33. This place connected with Bhāgirāthis is named Binduśaras in other Purāṇas.

34. Nāraka-p. 5. 36.14.4; yata-jāta rūpānu (Sk. Revā p. 196. 9; Bhāg. p. 2. 11.63).

35. See the saying of Nāraka to the apsarases: abhāma is known as ariyodipa: k壮大tiṣyasi navānapurāṇaḥ. (Bhāg. 9.3.36; mark the non-use of Nara in the name; a similar use is found in Bhāg 10.87-5 and Sk. Badarikāstama 2. 31-32. see also Bhāg. 10.52.4; 9.1.31; Matsya-p. 61. 21; see also Padma-p. 5. 22.23-24. The Gandhamadana hill is called Nārāyana-giri (Sk. Revā 194. 33-34). Thus hill is said to be the abode of Kimpurāṣa (Mbh. Vana-p. 158. 38).

36. This episode is known as Urvāṣika-tīrtha in the Nāraka-p. 2. 67. 65 also, which is said to be situated in the Nāraka-p. 2. 67. 65. Bhāg. 3. 10. 79). The Urvāṣika-tīrtha in the Badarikāstama is mentioned in Nāraka-p. 2. 67. 65.

37. Nāraka-p. 5. 36.14.4; yata-jāta rūpānu (Sk. Revā p. 196. 9; Bhāg. p. 2. 11.63).

38. One of them is the Urvāṣika (see Vāra-p. 141. Cr. ed.). There is difference of opinion about the identification of Gandhamadana. It is identified with a part of the Rudra Himālaya, or with a part of Kailāsa range, or with that part on which Badarikāstama is situated. Usually it is identified with that part of Himālaya through which the river Alakananda flows.

39. The identification of Gandhamadana is also connected with that part on which the river Alakananda flows.

40. One of them is the Urvāṣika (see Vāra-p. 141. Cr. ed.). There is difference of opinion about the identification of Gandhamadana. It is identified with a part of the Rudra Himālaya, or with a part of Kailāsa range, or with that part on which Badarikāstama is situated. Usually it is identified with that part of Himālaya through which the river Alakananda flows.

41. This place connected with Bhāgirāthis is named Binduśaras in other Purāṇas.

42. Nāraka-p. 5. 36.14.4; yata-jāta rūpānu (Sk. Revā p. 196. 9; Bhāg. p. 2. 11.63).

43. See the saying of Nāraka to the apsarases: abhāma is known as ariyodipa: k壮大tiṣyasi navānapurāṇaḥ. (Bhāg. 9.3.36; mark the non-use of Nara in the name; a similar use is found in Bhāg 10.87-5 and Sk. Badarikāstama 2. 31-32. see also Bhāg. 10.52.4; 9.1.31; Matsya-p. 61. 21; see also Padma-p. 5. 22.23-24. The Gandhamadana hill is called Nārāyana-giri (Sk. Revā 194. 33-34). Thus hill is said to be the abode of Kimpurāṣa (Mbh. Vana-p. 158. 38).
42. The description of Hemanta season (3.16.16); 

The Wheat Question

We had occasion to note under topic no. 15, page 113, 'Rice seems to have been the main cultivation of Vālmiki's India. Wheat was known in India in the time of Vālmiki' as a cultivated crop i.e. as a foodstuff. It is not that wheat itself was completely unknown. In fact, the following reference to it needs some discussion-

To understand the proper perspective we must look into the thematic structure of this Sarga. It can well be divided into three parts-

1. Śi.1-8: description of human habitat and agricultural and other activities.

2. Śi.9-26: description of the forest in the winter season (naturally, it is longer than the previous one as Rāma was dwelling in the forest itself).

3. Śi.27-40: rememberance of Ayodhyā and Bharata.Śi.41-43 form the epilogue.

Now, it is to be noted that in first part concerning agriculture, wheat is not named. 'Sasya' seems to mean paddy crop, as is clear by the sloka 6, because it is paddy alone which ripens in Āgrahāyāṇa. As a contrast distinction, barley and wheat have been mentioned in the context of forests. It may be argued that there might have been barley and paddy fields' bordering the forest, and so there is nothing unusual in their description along with the forest. In fact, in the very next sloka, paddy has also been described (3.16.17):