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THE PURANIC DEFINITION OF YAJÑA

By
RAM SHANKAR BHATTACHARYA

In three Purāṇas we find the following verse defining yajña (Vedic sacrifice):

पञ्चान व्यवहारिषयि अवलंबयमनाथा तथा |
व्यवहारिषयि वनस्ये तथा उच्चति ||

(Vayu-p. 59.42; Brahmāṇḍa-p. 1.32.4; Matsya-p. 145.44 with the reading द्विक्षितात्स)

Here yajña is said to be a combination of the entities, namely शस्त्र, ध्रुव्य, शस्त्रसमर्पण, कृत्य and दक्षिणा. It is to be noted that पञ्चान etc. are regarded as the शस्त्र or अश्व (subsidaries) by the Mānāsakas.

The aforesaid factors are going to be discussed here chiefly with the help of Puranic statements. As to why fire has not been mentioned in the aforesaid definition, it may be said that since all अड्डित्र are not invariably given into fire (certain अड्डित्र are given into water etc.) it has not been mentioned in the definition. Yajmāna may reasonably be included in द्वित्यस

It is to be noted that in the Purāṇas yajña is said to be of five kinds (त पञ्चान व्यवहारिषयि Bhāg. 4.7.41). These five are: Agni, dātā, Dārśa-pārnamāsa, Cāturmāsya, Paśu and Soma (see the comm. by Śrīdhara). A similar view is expressed by Viṣṇupurāṇa 3.4.1 (समस्ततः क्लेश्य पञ्चान). These ten kinds are the aforesaid five yajñas in their two forms, namely prakṛti and viśeṣa.

The division of sacrifices into kratu and yajña is also found in the Purāṇas. The division is based on the use and non-use of

3. Cp. सताम पदे जूह्वति (Tai. Saṁ. 6.1.8). See also the Upodghita (in Hindi, p. 89) in the Śrīman Śaivārtha by Y. Mīmāṁsaka.

4. The indeclinable च in this verse may be taken in the sense of samuccaya (accumulation) and consequently any intended factor (for example deśa) may be included in this definition. Such an inclusion does not seem to be necessary.

5. Cp. अवविन्धवधकारीकमहामहुसोधनां प्रवतितिकुतिकुतिकुति रसेक्षन (Bhāg. 5.7.5). It is to be noted that in the Vedas we find the conception of pāṅkta ṣaṇḍa, vide Śatapatha Br. 1.2.16 where a yajña is said to be pāṅkta, for there are five kinds of ṣaṇḍa, namely ṣaṇḍa, kram, parśva, pūrṇa and ṣaṇḍa. The conception of pāṅkta yajña is found in Tai. up. 1.7.1 also. Anandagiri in his comment clearly says that since the performance of yajña depends upon ṣaṇḍa, ṣaṇḍa, pūrṇa, maṇḍatva and evāntika, it is called pāṅkta. Explaining Br. up. 1.4.17 (which contains the view of pāṅkta yajña) Śaṅkara remarks that since yajña is performed by pūrṇa and ṣaṇḍa, each of which has five parts (namely mānas, bhāṣa, prāṇa, nāma and bhūta), it is called pāṅkta.

6. It is to be noted that there is a four-fold division of yajñas. The four forms are: prakṛti, viśeṣa, prakṛti-viśeṣa and abhāvena-abhāvena. For a clear description of these four forms, see Āryavīḍyāṣudhākara (p. 45) by Bhaṭṭa Yajñeśvāra Śaṁman.
There is however a variant reading देवताम् in the place of पूजनम् in the verse defining यज्ञा. The variant reading has not been recorded in the Anandaram ed. of the Vāyu and Matsya Purāṇas. The author (a well-known panḍita living in Vārāṇasi) who has quoted (in his work in Hindi) the verse with the reading देवताम् is silent on the reading पूजनम्. He has not even mentioned the name of the digest in which the verse has been quoted with the reading देवताम्. It is evident that the scholar came to know of this reading directly from his teachers.

The reason for replacing पूजनम् by देवताम् by the teachers of later time is obvious. Since the killing of animals in worship came to be regarded as a highly cruel act owing to the influence of Vaisnavism, the followers of Vedic religion (who were mentally Vaiṣṇavas) did not like to kill animals in sacrifices. Consequently they thought to replace पूजनम् not by any other word but by देवताम् as this would render the verse more attractive. These followers of the Vedic religion considered this replacing of पूजनम् by देवताम् quite justified since there lies invariable connection between यज्ञा and the attainment of svarga, the abode of the devas (Matsya-p. 143.33; Agni-p. 379.1; Brahmanda-p.1.30.44).

Re-Yajus-Sāman

The essential characteristic of यज्ञा is said to be the offering of something to devatās (देवताविद्या) by uttering र्च, yajus and sāman—the three kinds of mantras. Though the vidhi (injunction) of यज्ञास is expressed by the passages of the Brāhmaṇas, yet the acts of offering, invoking etc. (in sacrifices) are done by using the mantras. That is why the act of sacrifice is stated to be

8. The verse has been quoted by Pt. Veṇi Rāma Sārmā Gauḍa in his Hindi booklet Yaṉiṇi-māṁśa with the reading देवताम् for पूजनम् (p.5). The booklet was written some years before its publication in 1951.

9. For the definition of these three kinds of mantras, see Brahmanda-p. 1.33.36-39. The Puranic definitions are in accordance with the Rg-aṣṭa (p.500) and the Vargadāvavṛtti on the Rg-pratīṣṭhākhya (p.6). There are a few corrupt readings in the aforesaid verses of the Brahmaṇa-purāṇa. For the precise definitions of these three kinds of mantras, see Purvaṇi-māṁśa-sūtras 2.1.35-37.
There is an emphatic statement in the Purāṇas which declares that the three kinds of mantras were created by Prajāpati the creator with a view to performing yajñas: त्रिविधं यज्ञं सामाजिक तथा यज्ञिकों (Brahma-p. 1.49.13; Agni-p. 17.13; Śiva-p. 5.29.21).

The Puranic authors noticed that in these three kinds of mantras it was the yajñas mantra that was chiefly connected with the sacrificial act as may be inferred from the passage यज्ञिकों यो वेद स वेद यज्ञान् occurring in the following verse:

हृदयो वेद स वेद वेदान्तु यज्ञिकों यो वेद स वेद यज्ञान्।
सामाजिकों यो वेद स वेद यज्ञान्।
(वैयु-प. 79.95; ब्राह्मण-प. 2.15.68 with the reading वैचन्त्र). (Vāyu-p. 79.95; Brahmāṇḍa-p. 2.15.68 with the reading वैचन्त्र).

The Purāṇas sometimes clearly show the connection of yajña with the Veda which comprise both mantras and brahmaṇas. The reason is obvious. While the brāhmaṇa passages prescribe siddhi concerning yajñas the mantras are uttered while performing various sacrificial acts.11

The connection of yajña with the Veda can be known from the following Puranic assertions:

10. The importance of mantra may be known from the mention of the three kinds of mantras in the definition of śrāvāna-dharma given in the Purāṇas: द्विद्वातन्त्रिकसंयोगमूलसार: सामाजिक: (Vāyu-p. 47.49; Brahmanḍa-p. 1.29.45).

11. For the relative predominance of mantras and brahmaṇas, see commentaries on Māṁsaśāstra 5.1.16. The mantras are helpful by reminding the sacrificer of the several aṅgas to be performed. According to Pārvaśmāṇas mantras alone are to be used for this act of reminding aṅgas.

(i) Vedas were spoken out by Brahmā for yajña or they were created by Him along with yajña.19
(ii) One Veda was divided into four so that yajñas can be performed easily.18
(iii) Four principal sacrificial acts are connected with the four Vedas respectively.14
(iv) There will be no yajñas if the Vedas are destroyed.15
(v) Persons following the Vedas usually worship God by performing yajñas.16
(vi) Persons practising Vedic devotion (vaidiḥ bhaṅki) perform Vedic sacrifices.17

12. बेठा मध्य वैदिक यज्ञार्थ नाम संबंध: (Skanda, Prabhās 165.10);
13. ब्रह्मण-सामाजिक संबंध: (Bhāg. 3.12.37);
14. वैयु-प. 5.4.12; Agni-p. 150. 24-25a; Vāyu-p. 60.18; Bhramāṇḍa-p. 1.34.18; Kūrma-p. 1.52.17.
15. वैयु-प. 10.40.5.
16. गुप्तकालिक वैदिक त्यौ वै वैदिकां क्षमा: (Skanda, Kāśi 65.51; the printed reading वैदिकां is corrupt).
17. वैयु-प. 165.10.

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In connection with the first assertion it is interesting to note that some Puranic passages show the creation of the Vedas not only with some particular yajñas but also with some particular stomas (collection of r̥ṣis for stuti, eulogy, to be used in sacrifices), sāmans (Vedic songs to be sung in sacrifices) and metres as under:18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Veda</th>
<th>Metre</th>
<th>Stoma</th>
<th>Sāman</th>
<th>Yajña</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rgveda</td>
<td>Gāyatri</td>
<td>Trīṇit</td>
<td>Rathantara</td>
<td>Agniṣṭoma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yajurveda</td>
<td>Tristubh</td>
<td>Pañcadaśa</td>
<td>Bṛhat</td>
<td>Utkhya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sāmaveda</td>
<td>Jagāti</td>
<td>Saptadaśa</td>
<td>Vairōpa</td>
<td>Atriātra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atharvaveda</td>
<td>Anuṭubh</td>
<td>Ekaviṃśa</td>
<td>Vairāja</td>
<td>Āptoryāma19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is evidently based on Vedic tradition as may be known from the Brāhmaṇas. The coherence of the connection of the four Vedas with the particular yajñas, stomas etc. (as shown above) will be discussed in a separate article.

**Dravya-havis**

The expression *dravya-havis* (in वैष्णवस्मिनः) means *dravya*20 and *havis*. The former is द्रव्य, a term which occurs in the Purāṇas

18. Viṣṇu-p. 1.5.52-55; Vāyu-p. 9.48-52; Brahmāṇda-p. 1.8.50-53; Kārma p. 1.7.57-60; Liṅga-p. 1.70.243-246; Śiva-p. 7.12-56-62; Mārkaṇḍeya-p. 48.31-34. Printed readings of these verses in all the Purāṇas except those of the verses in the Viṣṇu-p. are corrupt in many places. The words (used in these passages), namely कृष्ण, मघ, सामनि and लक्ष्मणम् are to be taken in the sense of the four Vedas (and not of the mantras only) as is proved by the word अनुष्ठनम् which is not the name of any sort of mantras.

19. The Bhāgavata (3.12.40) however connects the Rgveda with the Śoḍaśin and Utkhya yajñas; the Yajurveda with Puriśin and Agniṣṭoma yajñas; the Sāmaveda with Āptoryāma and Atriātra yajñas and the Atharvaveda with Vajapeya and Gosava yajñas.

20. The important position of *dravya* in yajña may be known from the statement द्रव्यप्रत्यक्षको यज्ञः in Matsya-p. 143.33. Cp. Māmānsāṭṭra 2.3.14 (यज्ञप्रत्यक्षको यज्ञम्). The Māmānsaka regard yajña as 'dependent on *dravya*' since yajñas are performed with the help of *drayyas* (6.3.11-12). Not only money but also things like *yūpa*, etc.

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(Padma-p. 5, 16.27). It appears that *drayyas* are those that are different from both *havis* and their material causes. Thus *drayyas* may be the *sambhāras* (requisites) which are of two kinds, namely *pāthīṇa* (made of earth) and *vārkṣyā* (made of wood)—both are of seven kinds each (see Yajñatattvaprákāśa, p. 3).

It may be safely held that all things known as *yajñāyudhas* (see Tai Śām. 1.6.89 quoted in Śabara 3.1.11) and *yajnopātras* are to be taken as *drayyas*. It is well known that *sphya*, *kαpala*yūpa etc. are regarded as *drayyas* by the Māmānsakas (P. M. S. 3.1.11; 4.1.7 etc.).

*Dravya-havis* may be explained to mean ‘*havis* made of *drayya*’ (द्रव्यायपात्त, सुभिः). In this sense *drayyas* are those things of which *havis* are formed. The material causes of *havis* are said to be of three kinds, namely *oṣadhi*, *pala* and *soma*.22

The difference between a *havis* and its material cause (*drayya*) is easily discernible. As for example a *pala* is a *drayya* while certain parts of its body are the *havis*;23 *vrīhi* (grains of rice) or *jana* (barley) is the *drayya*, while *puradāta* (cake) is the *havis*; *vīśadvārtha* is the *drayya* and *cāru* is the *havis*; the Soma creeper is the *drayya* while *somarasa* is the *havis*. Sometimes the same thing in a particular state or position (i.e. without any transformation) becomes a *havis*.

Following *havis* are often found to have been mentioned in the Puranic passages describing sacrificial acts: milk, curd (dadhī),

are regarded as *drayyas* (Māmānsāṭṭra 6.1.10; 6.3.38). Even mantras are regarded as *drayyas* (MS. 9.2.4). *Drayya* is said to be one of the two *rīpas* of yajña (the other being *devatī*; see commentaries on Māmānsa-ṣūtra 2.2.3; 2.2.6; 2.2.13; 2.3.14.

21. A list of thirteen *sambhāras* associated with *yajamāna* and thirteen other associated with his wife, is to be found in Baudhāyana Srauta Sūtra 6.1. The word *sambhāra* is found in the Purāṇas: नृथमाकरणा यज्ञः नालोकान्तिकरणः (Padma-p. Adi. 11.14; Matsya 111.13).

22. The connection of *oṣadhi* (grain) with yajña has been stated in Viṣṇu-p. 1.6.49 and Varāha-p. 8.30. *Oṣadhis* are of two kinds, cultivated and wild (*grāmya* and *grārya*) and each has seven varieties (Viṣṇu-p. 1.6.23b-26; Padma-p. 5.3.145-150).

23. In the Pāñcīvata yāga the whole animal is offered.
Pāsu

Though from the aforesaid definition of yājña it appears that the connection of pāsu (animal) with yājña is invariable, yet in fact pāsu is connected not with all kinds of yajñas but with a particular kind called nirūṣṭhapatubandha or pāsuyajña. It should be known that pāsu as such is not a havis; particular limbs of a pāsu is called havis (P. M. S. 10.7.1-2; see 10.7.4 for the number of the limbs).

Puranic views about the use of pāsu in yājña are stated here in brief:

(i) Animals were created by Prajāpati for yājña or Prajāpati employed animals to yājña.26

(ii) The killing of animals (in yājñas) is technically called sanjīnāpana, meaning ‘killing without wounding or drawing blood’, i. e. by strangling or choking.26

(iii) The killing in sacrifice gives rise to violence (hiṁsa) and consequently yājña is said to be the means of attaining hell.27

In connection with the view of ‘violence in yājña’ it is worth noticing that the Puranic passages showing the views of anti-Vedic

25. सूक्त फ़र्काफ़ी: सम्भव कुनान्तो स वतावे (विज्ञ-प. 1.5.49: Padma-p. 5.3.100); एवं फ़र्काफ़ी: सूक्त नयत्वा हास्ये गृहः (वयु-प. 9.45); एवं याचे पत्तों सम्भवे देवार्ण मिला नका (अनुवाद-प. 5.16.8). स्त्रार्थ यहों मुख्यतः व्यवः (मृक्षेत्र-प. 120.28) are also to be considered in this connection.

26. भूमि जागन्ते राज्ञ: पत्तों पद्य लघुमते (संतपत्ता बुधपंचांश) (भाग. 4.25.7); एवं यवत्रोपने ब्राह्मणेप्राची (भाग 4.28.26); इन्हें क्रुद्ध बोलने वीरं कीलणे: (भाग. 4.27.11). संबंध धार्मिका इन्द्राणििपिनं ज्ञात्वात्तबिनमित्तमुद्यं (ज्ञातवत्तबिनमित्तमुद्यं (यज्ञसत्सार-प्रकाश, p. 42, fn. 2) बधास्य भारसंस्कारणम् (Comm. on Ap. Sr. Sa. 7.165).

27. प्रथम पंडिता वेदना मया विषादाख्यात हे; हिंसामयाते पंडिता: कटामन्त्रहृदयः (D. Bhag. 11.14.42); एवं सत्ता समयामयां स्त्वत्वमिकांतः हि स्वतिं हिंसां द्वारम् (D. Bhag. 11.14.49-50); शास्त्रानां शास्त्रानां पंडिता: समयामयां स्त्वत्वमिकुलकांमां हि (D. Bhag. 11.21.30).
schools expressly assert that the killing of animals is prescribed in yajña and that this violence is not only unreasonable but also fruitless.²⁸

(iv) The killing of animals in yajña is no violence.²⁹

(v) Animals killed in yajñas attain elavation or heaven.³⁰

(vi) The performing of yajñas by using things other than patus is preferred.³¹

(vii) Pāravyajña came into existence on account of the misunderstanding of the Vedic injunction ‘अजवेर्यांम्’, in which aja originally meaning ‘seed of grains that are more than three years old’ was taken to mean ‘a goat’.³²


29. न हि सा याज्ञिकी मता (D. Bhāg. 2.11.40); अहिंसा याज्ञिकी श्रोता सर्वाचैल्लिकी (D. Bhāg. 3.26.34). In the Devipūraṇa (ch. 97) the question whether the yajñas like Gomedaḥ, Aśvamedha etc. (in which animals are killed) are the means of attaining heaven, has been raised and the reply given is: यज्ञापनम् पत्: सुश्रुता यज्ञेष्ठाय ष: स्वयं: । अज्ञिं जार्जानाद दोषो बाहुम्मन-काँक्षी-कार्यम्:। ॥३१। देशवाणि सत्तुतायं मनुष्याः पुरुषर। वधवन् न संवेदन स्मरयत्र सुगद्यितिभव॥३२। (The printed reading of the last line is slightly corrupt).

30. यज्ञापनम् सुश्रुताः पत्नाः स्मरयित्वा (D. Bhāg. 3.26.34). In Mārkandeya-p. 120. 20-21 a deer says that animals killed in yajñas attain uccriti (elevation, prosperity). The view is based on Ai. Br. 2.6 (पत्नां निषिद्धम्: “स्वयं यथा य लोकेऽपि गिरिक्षमतार्”)

31. वन्यांश्वारोधभीतमिति कालशोधितानि (Bhāg. 11.18.7).

32. In the Matsya and Vāyu Purāṇas it is said that Indra performed an animal sacrifice for the first time. Sages told Indra that there was no injunction for animal killing in the Vedas and that in such Vedic statements as अजवेर्यांम्, the word aja meant seeds of corn which were old for more than three years. Indra did not accept this and thereupon Uparicara Vasu was requested to give

Rtvijś

A Puranic verse expressly speaks of the functions of four priests (ṛtvijś) and mentions the Vedas with which the functions are connected:

आज्ञिण्य जयभित्तु कर्मविनिः तथा मुनिः ।
ओषधार्या सामाजिकः क्रेष्ट्यां चायधविः: ॥

(Viṣṇu-p. 3.4. 12; see also Vāyu-p. 60.17; Kūrma-p. 152. 16; Brahmāṇḍa-p. 1.34. 18).

It is said here that hotra (to be performed by hotṛ) is connected with the Rg-veda; adhvarṇa (to be performed by adhvarṇa) is connected with the Yajurveda; australa (to be performed by australa) is connected with the Sāmaveda; and brahmavāna (to be performed by Brahmā) is connected with the Atharvaveda.²³ Udgātṛ is a decision. Uparicara Vasu supported the act of Indra and remarked that the Vedas were in favour of killing animals in Yajñas. Consequently he was cursed by the sages. This episode (which occurs in the Mahābhārata also) is highly significant and it deserves to be discussed seriously.

It is to be noted that in these chapters of the Purāṇas there are a few corrupt readings which must be corrected in order to render the relevant passages meaningful; as for example वायु (in Mat. 143.14 and Vāyu. 57.100) should be corrected to वायु (i.e.) The PMS also uses the word वायु in 11.3.15 and 5.2.13; see also comm. on 11.4.44.

33. The nature of the works of these four priests has been succinctly stated by the commentator Śridhara: Śastra (to be performed by hotṛ) is आज्ञिण्यासूत्र स्त्रीलिङ्ग: i.e. the act of offering oblation is to be performed by adhvarṇa; stuti-stoma (to be performed by Udgātṛ) is स्तुतिः स्मरयित्वा जात्रेकार्यम्; प्रायसित्था is to be performed by brahmā.

Wilson quotes the commentarial passage प्रयश्चितो वैहित्रम् and renders it by ‘expiation or sacred philosophy (brahmā)’ (Translation of the Viṣṇupurāṇa 1.5; p. 37). The word brahma seems to create the confusion. There is no relevance of sacred philosophy here. प्रयश्चितो वैहित्रम् simply means ‘prāyasītthā is the work of Brahmā, the priest connected with the Atharvaveda.'
called Samaga in some Purāṇas (Bhāg. 9.7.22). These four functions are collectively called brahmaṇaḥ which is explained as द्रवणीयविविधतात्कताः स्वतः क्रियान्वयिस्बन्धूताः (Śrīdhara’s comment on Bhāg. 1.4.19). The Bhāg. uses āśāstra for āhara, āṣāyā for adhāvaryya, stuti-stoma for audgātra and prāyāscitta for brahmavatā in 5.29.6.

Each of the four priests has three assistants84 and thus the total number of priests comes to sixteen85. All of these priests are not required in all kinds of yajñas. It is the soma-yajnas that require sixteen priests. In some Puranic passages the names of all the sixteen priests are spoken of.86

Uparāṣṭṛ is sometimes mentioned as a priest in the Purāṇas. Sadasya, sometimes mentioned in the Purāṇas, are not regarded as priests (see comm. on P. M. S. 3.7.37). Camasaśadvāryus are also mentioned in the Puranic descriptions of sacrifices (Padma-p. 5.29.2). They are however not regarded as rtvij (see P. M. S. 3.7.25-30). Similarly Śāmīt (killer) is also mentioned in the lists of priests. This name is given to one of the priests of the adhāvary group and as such he is included in the rtvij (P. M. S. 3.7.29-30). Similarly somaṅkriyāin mentioned only in a few passages in the Purāṇas are not regarded as priests (P. M. S. 3.7.31).

The yajamāna who is regarded as a priest in the sattras (cp. सर्वे यज्ञसारस्ते यज्ञविष्णु; comm. on P. M. S. 10.6.52), may also be regarded as an rtvij. A yajamāna is sometimes called Grāhamati in the Purāṇas. He is defined as यज्ञविष्णु यज्ञकार यज्ञमान (Liṅga-p. 1.28.5).

34. The names as given in some of the Purāṇas are as follows: Hoṭi has three assistants, namely Māitrāvuraṇa, Acchāvāka, and Grāvastutu; Adhāvaryu has three assistants, namely Pratipraṭhātṛ, Neṣṭṛ, and Unneṭṛ; Udgaṭr has three assistants, namely Prastroṭ, Pratihārṭ and Subrahmanya; Brahman has three assistants, namely Brāhmanāc-chaṃsīn, Āgniḍhra and Poṭṛ.

35. See Māṁsāśa-sūtra 3.7.37 (स्वामिसवक्तव्यतयाधिकवादप). In this siddhānta-sūtra yajamāna has been regarded as a rtvij.

36. Matsya-p. 467.6-13; Varāha-p. 21.13-20; Skanda, Setu 23.22-31; Skanda, Nāgara 5.3-8; 180.32-37; Padma-p. 5.36.83-86; 5.29.7-11. The Purāṇas sometimes use the word poda while referring to the priests; see Padma-p. 5.16.100; 5.29.11. In these Puranic passages there are a few corrupt readings in the names of the sixteen priests.

37. धक्षिणा इत्यः कह्यम् मूर्तिमिश्रत (Śamba-p. 34.29). The view is based on such Vedic passages as तत्पत्रायु यज्ञविशिष्ट यज्ञमान (Ai. Br. 6.35). For the Māṁsāśa view about daksīṇa, see PMS. 10.6.61-71.

38. [वर्] दक्षिण यज्ञविशिष्ट (Matsya-p. 93.111); तत्पत्र दक्षिणाहिनी कुलेष मुक्तीश्च दक्षिण (Br. Vai. p. 3.23.34, said by Lakṣmī). Such statements as ‘यह यज्ञार्दित मानोत्तरां’ (Skanda-p. Nāgara 187.46) may also be considered in this connection.

39. कृष्ण च च च तु तृण द्रव्याय दक्षिणाय | तत्पत्र फलामान्यात देवसंकिर्यिव मुनि (Br. Vai. p. 2.42.53). The Vedic statement on which this view is based is not known. The importance of daksīṇa may be known from its etymology—दक्षिण—which seems to be related to दक्षिण “south” (Kanitakī Br. 15.1) Daksīṇa is called so since it renders a sacrifice capable or powerful (कृष्ण is derived from the word दक्षिण).
(v) Priests leave the sacrificer (yajamana) (i.e. there remains no further connection) after receiving the dakṣiṇa. Since the priests are regarded as ‘hired person’ (dakṣiṇā-kriya; dakṣiṇa is regarded as bhṛti, wages) it is quite natural that the priests work like ‘workers’ and they have no love or friendship for their yajamana.

(vi) For certain yajñas huge amounts were paid as dakṣiṇa.42

We want to conclude the article by quoting a Puranic verse which eulogizes Viṣṇu by identifying him with yajña:

नमो द्रिष्टहीणं विष्णु शुद्धज्ञात सकाले।
सहस्रादय यज्ञव जयोवियासमे नमः ॥

(Bhāg. 8.16.31; an eulogy to Viṣṇu).

Hail to you as the deity presiding over sacrifices endowed with a couple of heads (in the form of the rites known as the Prāyaṣṭīya and Udayanīya, which are performed at the beginning and the end of a sacrifice respectively), three feet (in the form of Sawana or the pressing out of the Soma juice,) which is done thrice a day, viz. in the morning, at midday and in the evening), four horns (in the form of the four Vedas; Rk, Sāma, Yajus and Atharva) and seven arms (in the form of the seven Vedic metres, Gāyatri, Triṣṭubh, Anuṣṭubh, Brhāti, Pankti, Jagati and Uṣṇik)—the Bestower of reward of sacrifices, whose essential nature has been described in the three Vedas (treating mainly of rituals). (Translation taken from the Gita Press edition of Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa).43

BOOK-REVIEW

Retrieval of History from Purānic Myths By P. L. Bhargava, M. A., Ph. D. Shastri, Retired Prof. of Sanskrit and Ancient Indian History, Rajasthan University, Jaipur; pages 122; Pub.: The Upper India Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., Aminabad, Lucknow, U. P. 226018; Price Rs. 60.00.

The object of writing this book (containing eight essays), according to the author, is to show that the myths concerning eight Puranic personages (namely Viśvāmitra, Paraśurāma, Bhagiratha, Rāma, Vyāsa, Kṛṣṇa, Yudhiṣṭhira and Vālmīki) are at complete variance with the ancient evidence regarding them. The author seems to be abreast with the Puranic works and it is gratifying to note that he is in favour of the view that the Puranic genealogies are not the figment of the imagination of idle priesthood, but are based on reliable ancient tradition (p. 8).

In the first essay (called Introduction) the author makes a laudable attempt at showing authoritativeness of Puranic statements about the names, the order of succession and the regnal years of kings coming under ten dynasties. The second essay tries to establish that Vyāsa was the author of one Purāṇa-samhitā and that he was not responsible for the numerous absurd sectarian myths, legends and doctrines that found their way into the present Purāṇas. The third essay says that Viśvāmitra was not the father of Śakuntala but her distant descendant through her son Bharata and that the anecdote of his dalliances with Menakā is a mendacious myth.

In the fourth essay the author has propounded that the myth of Paraśurāma’s killing his mother is the creation of the person who drafted it in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa with the object of providing an illustration for the virtue of implicit obedience to father. The fifth essay tries to prove that the king Bhagiratha simply arrived on the bank of the Gaṅga and gave the river his name. An attempt has been made in the sixth essay to show that the story of Śiśu’s banishment by Rāma and the slaying of the Śudra ascetic Śambhu by Rāma was invented at a very late period.