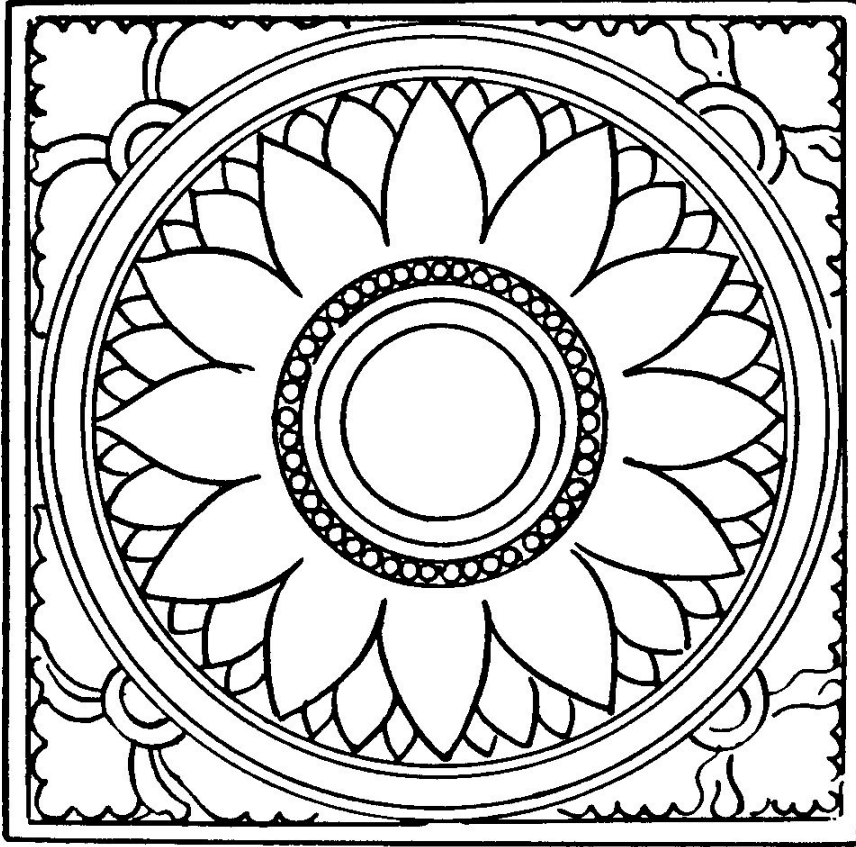


HISTORY OF DHARMA-ŚĀSTRA

(ANCIENT AND MEDIAEVAL RELIGIOUS AND CIVIL LAW IN INDIA)

HINDU FASTS & FESTIVALS



BY

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute has great pleasure in publishing the first part of the fifth and last volume of Mahāmahopadhyāya Dr. P. V. Kane's monumental History of Dharma-śāstra. This part comprises two sections. The first section deals at length with many important vratas and utsavas such as Kṛṣṇajanmāṣṭamī, Durgotsava, Diwāli, Sankrānti, Mahā-śiva-rātri, Holika, and also includes brief notices of about 1100 vratas, pujās and utsavas with references; the second section deals with Kāla (Time), and its philosophic conceptions from Vedic times downwards; Indian Astronomy and Astrology and the theories of Western scholars about them; nakṣatras and astrology based on them; muhūrtas and their employment in religious rites; the Zodiacal signs; planets and week-days principles laid down in Indian astrological works. Calendar, eras and intercalary month; Yuga, Manvantaras and Kalpas, Yoga and Karana; and reform of our calendar.

The second part of this volume will treat of such topics as śāntis-Vedic and post-Vedic; Purānas and their influence on Dharma-śāstra, society and Buddhism; Tantras and Dharmasima'; Pūrva-mīmāṃsa and other darśanas in relation to Dharma-śāstra, cosmology: the theory of 'punar-janma'; the essential characteristics of our culture through the ages and future trends.

All prefatory matter, including list of abbreviations, brief synopsis of the contents, list of works consulted, etc., as also General index for the whole volume, will be given in the second part, which we hope to publish before long.

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Honorary Secretary.

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CHAPTER 1

1. Meaning of Vrata

vrt = to turn, to revolve.

Occuring without an *upasarga* it means 'to remain or abide'.

Even with an *upasarga* like 'sam'+ 'vrt' it means simply — 'to be or to abide' and not 'revolve or turn' or 'move on.'

Samvartana = to return home after graduation from Vedic studies.

Prof Apte arranges the meaning of *vrata* into 2 phases of semantic development.

The divine phase of meaning has six groups, viz. (1) turning round, passage, procedure, physical activity, (2) circular path, settled or beaten route, (3) sphere or region of movement or influence, (4) routine, laws of movement periodic appearance or visit, customary activity, recurring march, (5) victorious advance or strength, (6) ordinance, law, rule or code of conduct.

In the 'human phase' of semantic development he sets out four groups of senses, viz. (1) physical activity (as distinguished from mental), duty, profession; (2) the sum total of those peculiar ethical and religious duties and practices which made up the culture pattern of the Aryans; (3) the specific social and religious duties of the three classes of Aryan Society, (4) devotion to duty in general on the part of men and women.

I have summarised Prof Apte's long list of meanings in ten groups. The very fact that Prof Apte had to marshall over sixty 'English equivalents for the meaning of the word 'vrata', which occurs in the Rig Veda only about 220 times by itself or in combination with other words is enough to make scholars suspicious about the correctness of the entire scheme. Though he asserted in one place (p 410), that no passage in the Rig-Veda favors the meaning 'will or command' he admits (on pp. 476-4:77) that in three passages (Rig 11:38:7, X. 105, X. 33:9) the meaning of *vrata* as 'ordinances laid down by a divinity for devotees or human beings' is quite acceptable to him and further that in about 25 passages (which come under groups II to IV of the so-called human phase of Prof. Apte) *vrata* either means 'ethical or religious code of practices of the three classes of Aryans' or 'beneficent sway or devotion'

I derive the word from the root 'vr' (to choose). From this root comes the word 'vara' (bridegroom who is chosen from among several men by a maiden or her guardian), which occurs in Rig IX.101.14 and X.85.8 and 9. Choosing involves willing or volition on the part of the person choosing. Hence 'vr' also means 'to will'. Therefore, when the word *vrata* is derived from 'vr' with the suffix 'ta', the meaning of *vrata* can be — 'what is willed' or simply 'will'. The will of a

person in power or authority is a command or law unto others Thus comes the sense of *vrata* as ‘law or ordinance.’ A command of a superior imposes and implies a corresponding duty to obey. When commands are obeyed or duties are performed in the same way for long, they become the patterns of obligations i.e. customs or practices.

When persons believe or feel that they must perform certain acts as ordained by gods, then the sense of religious worship or duty arises. If a person imposes upon himself certain restrictions as to behavior or food to win the favor of the gods that becomes a sacred vow or religious observance.

Thus the several meanings of the word ‘*vrata*’, which I derive from the root ‘*vr̥*’, are:— command or law, obedience or duty, religious or moral practices, religious worship or observance, sacred or solemn vow or undertaking, then any vow or pattern of conduct. It should not be supposed that these several meanings followed one another in a time sequence. Two or more meanings might have been simultaneously in vogue such as ‘ordinance duty or obedience’.

2. Vrata in the Brāhmaṇas

It appears that in the times of the Brāhmaṇas the word ‘*vrata*’ had come to have two secondary senses derived from the sense of ‘religious observance or obligation’ in ‘a proper course or pattern of conduct for a person’, and ‘an *upavāsa*’ i.e. the sacrificer's staying at night near *Gārhapatya* fire or fasting. As illustrative of the first may be cited a passage that occurs towards the end of the Ait. Br. viz.

‘this is the *vrata* for him (for the king who has performed what is called ‘*Brāhmaṇah paramaraḥ*’) that he should not sit down before his enemy sits down (but should do so after), if he thinks (from information received) that his enemy is standing the king should also stand up; he should not he down before his enemy (does so) if the king thinks that (the enemy) has sat down he may then himself sit down, he should never sleep before his enemy sleeps if he thinks that the enemy is awake he should himself keep awake even if the enemy has his head as hard as a stone (or has a stone helmet on his head), he (the king who performs the *parimara*) quickly overthrows him.’

The other secondary meaning of *vrata* seems to be *upavāsa* (i.e. Yajamāna's passing the night in the Darsa-iṣṭi and the Pūrṇamasa-iṣṭi near the Gārhapatya and other fires, or reducing his intake of food or fasting) that he performs *upavāsa* in Darśa and Pūrṇamāsa iṣṭis is so because the gods do not partake of the offering made by one who has not undergone *vrata*, therefore he undergoes *upavāsa* with the thought ‘the gods may partake of my offering!’ III (Ait Br. VII:2)

3. Vrata in the Śtrauta Sūtras

Coming to the Srautasūtras, the two principal meanings of *vrata* mentioned above often figure in them. The Grihya-sūtras and Dharma-sūtras also present

the same meaning of *vrata*. For sample, the Aśv. Gr in 3:10;5-7 states — ‘these are the vratas for him, viz. he should not bathe at night, nor bathe naked, nor run while it is raining &c.’ the Par. Gr. II 8 says that the *snātaka* has to follow for three days after *samavartana* certain observances such as not eating meat, not using earthen vessels for drinking water, not looking at women, Śūdras, corpses and crows, not speaking with Śūdras, not urinating or voiding ordure nor spitting in front of the sun, or he should simply speak the truth (instead of observing the other requirements of this passage). Gautama (VIII.15), Sankhayana-grhya (II:11-12), Gobhila-grhya (m 1.26-31) and others mention certain *vratas* (now obsolete) which every Vedic student was to undergo.¹ The Ap Dh. Sū 2:1.1.1ff specifies the observances to be followed by the husband and wife from the day of their marriage such as eating only twice in the day, not eating to satiety, fasting on *parvan* days. Similarly, the Ap. Dh. S. (I. 11. 30 6, I 11 31) sets out the observances for *snātakas* (*athe snātaka-vratāni*) Panini has a special sūtra ‘*vrata*’ (III.2.80) for explaining the formation of words from *vrata* with the affix *in* (nim) preceded by a substantive such as ‘*sthandilaśāyin*’ and ‘*aśrāddha-bhoji*’ (one who has taken the vow of not partaking of śrāddha food). Panini (m 1. 21) also teaches the formation of a denominative verb from *vrata* in the sense of ‘doing’ (*vratayati vratam karoti*).

As *prāyaścittas* (expiations) involved the observance of several strict rules they came to be called *vratas* in Manu (XI.117, 170,176,181), Yajñavalkya (in 251, 252, 254, 258), Sankha (17. 6, 22, 4:2, 611, 62) and other smṛtis. In the Mahābharata the word *vrata* is mainly used in the sense of a religious undertaking or vow in which one has to observe certain restrictions about food or one's general behavior.² It was also applied in the epic to a course or pattern of conduct or behavior, not necessary religious. For example, in the Sabha-parva 58:16 Yudhisthira says that it has been his constant vow that he would not refuse gambling when he was challenged to it. Apart from the secondary applications of the word *vrata*, its principal meaning from at least the first centuries of the Christian era onwards has been that of a religious undertaking or vow, observed on a certain *tithi*, week day, month or other period, for securing some desired object by the worship of a deity, usually accompanied by restrictions as to food and behavior. This is the sense in which the word ‘*vrata*’ will be used in this section. Vratas may be ‘Expiatory’ (i.e. they will be *prāyaścittas*) or obligatory (such as the *vratas* of a brahmacarin or *snātaka* or householder) or they may be voluntary and self-imposed for securing some specific end.

4. Vrata in the Medieval Digests

A great deal of discussion is found in the medieval digests on a comprehensive definition of *vrata*. Sabara on Jai. VI 2. 20 arrives at the conclusion that by

¹ Vide H. of Dh. vol II pp 370-373 for descriptions of these.

² Vide Vanaparva 296;3, Udyoga 39. 71-72, Śānti 35:39, Anusasana 103:34.

vrata is meant a mental activity which is a resolve in the form — “I shall not do this” and gives as an illustration the sentence — “one should not gaze at the rising or setting sun”. The Agni Purāna provides —

‘A restrictive rule declared by the Śāstras is called *vrata*, which is also regarded as *tapas*; restraint of senses and other rules are but special examples of *vrata*, *vrata* is called *tapas* because it causes hardship to the performer (of the *vrata*) and it is also called *yama* since therein one has to restrain the several sense organs.’

Manu II.3 declares — ‘resolve (*saṅkalpa*) is the root of desires, of sacrifices, of *vratas* and the characteristics called *yamas* — all are known to spring from resolve.’ But every *saṅkalpa* entertained by any person whatever is not and cannot be called *vrata*. It may be noted that the Amarakosa holds that the words ‘*niyama*’ and ‘*vrata*’ are synonyms and that the latter consists of fast and the like that produce merit (*puṇya*), while the Ap. Dh. Su I 2, 57 remarks that the word *tapas* is applied to the rules of conduct prescribed for a brahmacarin (*‘niyameṣu tapaḥ sabdah’*)

The Mitakṣara on Yaj. 129 appears to indicate that *vrata* is a mental resolve to do something or refrain from doing something, both being enjoined as duties it is therefore that Sridatta (probably taking his cue from Sabara and the Mit) in his Samaya-pradipa defines *vrata* as —

‘a definite resolve relating to a certain matter held as obligatory’

and proceeds to lay down that it may be positive (‘I *must* do it’) or negative (‘I *must not* do this’). He further holds that a resolve made with the addition of a condition not enjoined by śāstras is not a *vrata*: e.g. if a person were to declare that he would observe a fast if his father would not forbid it and that otherwise he would not, this would not be a *vrata* and that, since *saṅkalpa* is the principal matter in a *vrata*, if one of weak intellect or an ignorant person observes a fast without *saṅkalpa*, it would be simply so much physical hardship but no *vrata*.

That *saṅkalpa* is closely connected with *vrata* cannot be gainsaid and follows from a verse of Laghu-Viṣṇu — ‘the choosing of *rtviks* is the starting point of a sacrifice, *Saṅkalpa* that of *vrata* and of a *Japa* of mantras (in honor of a deity)’.

Lakṣmidhara in his Kṛtya-kalpa-taru on *vrata* does not define *vrata* but begins his treatment of *vrata* with eulogizing it — *vrata-praśamsa*.

Raghunandāna mentions the definitions of *vrata* given by Nārāyaṇa and Sridatta, but does not agree that *vrata* is a *saṅkalpa* but holds that *vrata* means various rites about which a resolve is made and also that *vrata* is a *niyama* (a restrictive rule) enjoined by the śāstra, characterised by *upavāsa* and the like and not every *niyama* such as “*rtu-kālābhigāmī syat*” (Yaj I 79, Manu 3:45).

The *Vrata prakāśa* (a part of *Viramitrodaya*) defines *vrata* as —

‘a special *saṅkalpa* concerning what is well known to the learned as *vrata*,’

The Dharmasindhu (p 9) defines vrata as a kind of religious rite consisting of pūjā and the like. Although at the root of every vrata and as an urge for it, there must be a *saṅkalpa* it appears to me that Raghunandāna and the Dharma-sindhu properly represent the popular meaning of vrata.

5. Components of a Vrata

A vrata comprehends several items such as *snāna*, (bath), the morning prayer (*prātaḥ-sandhya*), *saṅkalpa*, *homa*, *pūjā* of the deity or deities in whose honor or for securing whose favor the vrata is undertaken, fasting (*upavāsa*), feeding of Brāhmaṇas, maidens or married women or the poor and helpless (according to the nature of the vrata) gifts (of cows, money, apparel, sweetmeats etc.) and the observance of certain rules of conduct during the period of the vrata. Some of these matters will be dealt with in detail later on, but a few may be disposed off here. Some writers relying on Santāpa said that before a vrata was undertaken a *Vṛddhi-śrāddha*³ must be performed.

The Agni-Purāna (175 12) states that one who undertakes a vrata must always take a bath (every day), should subsist on a limited quantity of food, should worship and honor his guru, gods and brāhmanas and should eschew *kṣira kṣaudra*, *lavana*, honey and meat. Devala states without partaking of food (the previous night), after bathing and concentrating one's mind, one should, after invoking the Sun and other deities to be present, commence a vrata in the morning'. The general tendency of medieval writers to go on adding details to what was originally brief is seen at work here also the Vratākālaviveka says that before saṅkalpa, there should be remembrance of Nārāyaṇa and *namaskāra* to him, as laid down by Yogi-yajñavalkya.

6. The worship of Gaṇeśa

There is a difference of opinion about the worship of Gaṇeśa. The Vrata-kālaviveka quotes the Padma-Purāna for the order in which the several deities are to be worshipped and honored after saṅkalpa and refutes the idea that the worship of Gaṇeśa should always precede the worship of other deities. Though the general rule is that the Saṅkalpa of a vrata is to be made in the morning, still there are some passages to the contrary. For example, the Bhavishya Purāna (Uttara 11:6-8) provides that on the evening of Āṣāḍha Full Moon one should declare a resolve as follows:—

‘from tomorrow for one month in Śrāvana. I shall take a bath, observe brahmacārya, take one meal only after evening, sleep on the ground, will be compassionate to all living beings’.

³ A vṛddhi or āma śrāddha is one in which raw foodstuffs and dakṣiṇa are offered to a brāhmin in order to placate the ancestors.

7. Homa & Pūjā

There is a difference between homa and pūjā. A homa with Vedic mantras, according to ancient authorities, cannot be performed by women and Śūdras. Though theoretically the three varnas were entitled to perform *homa* with Vedic mantras, some learned Brāhmaṇas held the view that in the Kaliyuga no proper Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas existed. Even as to the Śūdra, some writers like Kamalākara-bhaṭṭa went so far that a Śūdra could not read and study even Purānas but should only listen to their recital by Brāhmaṇas! The result was that most people performed only pūjā and not *homa*. According to most writers, the *homa* was to be performed in honor of that deity for whose favor the *vrata* was performed. According to Vardhamāna and a few others the *homa* in a *vrata* may be in honor of the deity of the *vrata* or may be a *vyāhṛti-homa*. It is stated by the Agni-Purāna that there is japa, homa and also gifts at the end of all *vratas* in general and the Viṣṇudharmottara observes that those who perform *upavāsa-vrata* should inaudibly mutter the mantras of that deity, should meditate on that deity, should listen to stories about that deity, should worship the image of that deity, should take the names of that deity and listen to others singing the names.

Purva-mimamsa writers made a distinction between *homa*, *yāga* and *dāna*. Sabara on Jai. IV. 2. 28 puts the distinction in a nutshell by saying that:—

‘giving up what belongs to one is common to all the three, but *yāga* means simply giving up something intending it for a deity and accompanying it with a mantra, in *homa* there is in addition the throwing of a thing in fire, *dāna* consists in abandoning a thing that belongs to one and creating the ownership of another in that thing.’

In another place (on Jai IX.1.6). Sabara refers to the argument that *yāga* is nothing but the 'Worship of a deity (*api ca yāgo nāma devatā pūjā*).

Manu II 176 and Yaj. I. 99,100.102 show that Deva-pūjā is different from *homa* and was performed after the latter according to Marīci and Hārīta quoted in the Smṛticandrika, Smṛti-mukta-phala and other digests.

A few words about *homa* may be said here.

1. Women could not offer homa with mantras (Manu IX. 18). Homa could be performed for them through a priest.
2. When no particular substance is specified the *ahutis* (offering) into fire is to be of clarified butter⁴ (ghee).
3. The number of *ahutis* may be 108, 28 or 8 or as many as are expressly specified.

⁴ Karma pradīpa of Gobhila I. 113

8. The Number of Upacāras

It should be noted that ordinarily there are 16 *Upacāras* (items of showing honor) in the procedure of deva-pūjā, but they may be increased to 36 or 38 or reduced to 14, 12, 10 or 5 and there is no complete unanimity on the question of the names of the 16 upacāras and their order.

If a person is unable to offer even 5 upacāras then he should offer 2, viz. sandalwood paste and flowers and if he cannot do even that, then he may offer only devotion.

Medieval works prescribe for all vratas in general the recital of each of the sixteen verses of the Purusa-sukta. (Rig. X.90) with each of the sixteen upacāras in order (*āvāhana*, *āsana*, *pādyā*, *arghya*, *ācamaniyaka*, *snāna*, *vastra*, *yajñopavita*, *anulepana* (or *gandha*), *puṣpa*, *dhūpa*, *dīpa*, *naivedya*, *tambūla*, *dakṣina*, *Pradakṣina*) while some works associate with each of these one or more Pauranika mantras, also it should not be supposed that these upacāras (particularly *puṣpa*, *gandha*, *dhūpa*, *dīpa* and *naivedya*) were absent in the Vedic age and came into prominence at a very late stage by being borrowed from non-Aryan people. The Aśvins are described as wearing wreaths of blue lotuses (*puskara-sraji*) in Rig X 184:2 and Atharva III.22: 4 the Maruts also are spoken of as wearing wreaths (Rig V 53.4). in numerous passages the Rig-Veda refers to the casting of offerings (*nirmālya*) mixed with clarified butter in Agni (e.g. Rig Veda 59 1 and 5)⁷⁹ The gods are even asked to *eat apūpa*, *puroḍaśa*, *dhānā*, milk, curds, honey etc. in Rig. III:53 8m52 1-7, IVs2.16vm.91:2, in Atharva XVIII 4. 16-26. The underlying conception in these passages is the same as that involved in offering naivedya to an image. In the Satapatha Br 10 the word *upacāra* appears to have been used in the sense of 'honor' or 'mode of showing honor' in the Tai. Ar. occurs a mantra called 'Medha-janana' which was recited in the ear of a child in the jātakarma — 'may god Savitr, goddess Sarasvati and the gods Aśvins wearing wreaths of blue lotuses produce in you intelligence'. There is evidence that long before the time of the grhyasūtras several of the sixteen upacāras were well-known.

The Nighantu (m. 14) enumerates verbs that have the sense of 'worship' among which '*pūjayati*' is included The Nirukta in explaining the word '*supāṇih*' occurring in Rig III 33:6 states that the word '*pāni*' is derived from '*pan*' to offer pūjā and supports this derivation by saying that people worship gods by joining together their hands. It is clear that the Nighantu treated '*pūjāyati*' as a verb occurring in the Vedas and that joining the palms (i.e. *namaskāra*) was a item of worship long before the Nirukta.

From Pānini V 3 99 and the Mahābhāṣya thereon it is clearly seen that in the days of the former images of gods were made for sale and also for worship. Patanjali expressly says that the rule applies to images which were worshipped and which gave livelihood to the *pūjāris* of those images and not to images

made for sale.⁵ The Aś Gr. S provides that when madhūparka is to be offered to a rtvik, an ācārya, a bridegroom, a king or a snātaka or a relative (like father-in-law, paternal or paternal uncle), a seat, water for washing the feet, arghya water, water for ācamana, honey mixture a cow are to be announced to the guest three times in each case. In another place, the same sūtras speaks of the presentation of sandal-wood paste, flowers, incense, lamp and garment to the Brāhmaṇas invited at a śrāddha. In these two passages alone nine of the 16 upacāras are mentioned. The word pūjā took on a secondary meaning, viz. (honor without use of gandha, puṣpa &c) in the times of Dharma-sūtras (vide Ap.Dh.S.1.4,14 9. 'nitya ca pūjā yathopadesam') Yaj. (1 229 ff) mentions in śrāddha, āvāhana, arghya, gandha, mālya, dhūpa, dīpa, &c. When the worship of images became common, the upacāras that had been offered for showing honor and worship to worthy men were by a natural analogy employed in it. In my view the theory that pūjā and the upacāras were borrowed from the Dravidians or some non-Aryan people cannot be held to be proved, is quite speculative and that 'pūjā' of images of gods was an indigenous development. Medieval writers were careful to point out that there was no essential difference between yāga (Vedic or other sacrifice) and pūjā, as in both there was the giving of some substance intending it for a deity.⁶

Some works on vratas treat at great length the several upacāras, particularly flowers that should be offered to the various images worshipped, the consequences of offering those flowers, the various kinds of fragrant substances (*gandha*) to be offered or the incense to be burnt, the nature of the foods &c. Vide for example, Hemādri (on vrata) vol. I. pp. 4:9-51, Kṛtyaratnākara pp. '10-71, 77-'(9, Varśa-kriya-kaumudī IIP 156-181. For reasons of space it is not possible to treat of these matters here. Besides, H. of Dh vol. II.(pp731-784:) deals at some length with the unguents, the flowers, the lamps, the naivedya to be offered in the ordinary deva-pūjā. A few matters not mentioned there are set out here for the sake of completeness of treatment. The Sm. C. 1 p. 201 quotes the Padma Purāna to the effect that sandal-wood is holy among unguents (*gandha*), *agaru* (Agalochum) is better than sandalwood, dark *agaru* is still better and saffron is preferable to dark *agaru*. Hemādri (on vrata vol I pp 43-44) quotes passages from several Purānas defining *catuḥsama* as *tvak* i.e. cinnamon,

⁵ Vide also Mahābhāṣya on Panini 1.1 25.

⁶ Prof J Charpentier contributed a paper on 'the meaning and etymology of pūjā' to the Indian Antiquary 'VGI 56 pp 93-99 and pp 130 ff I demur to his conclusions .

He points out that 'pu' in Tamil means 'flower', that the word pūjā is derived from Dravidian, 'pūcu', 'pūsu' to paint or daub' (p. 153) and asks the question why red color is used in the worship of Gods he himself answers it by suggesting that it was a substitute for blood. There is no reason whatever for assuming that pūjā was derived from 'pu' and not from 'puṣpa' (flower) which was known to the Rig Veda (II.18 '1 'puṣpinih' and K 97 3 'puṣpavatih'). There is no sound reason to assume that 'pūsu' (to paint) existed thousands of years ago in Dravidian languages and was not a more recent acquisition, when the word pūjā can be traced a thousand Yugas before any existing literary work in any Dravidian language.

patrakā (cassia leaf), *lavanga* i.e. cloves, and saffron (or two parts of musk, four of sandalwood, three of saffron and one of camphor) and *sarva-gandha* as saffron, sandalwood, *usīra* (fragrant roots of a plant), *mustā*, *lāmajja* (root of fragrant grass), camphor and the three perfumed things viz. cinnamon, cardamom and nutmeg and *Yakṣa-kardama* as camphor, aguru, musk, sandalwood and kakkola.

The Agni Purāna (chap. 202 1) first states that Hari is pleased by the offerings of flowers, perfumes, Incense, lamps and naivedyam and then specifies the flowers that are fit for offering to the deities and that are unfit (verses 2-15). The Kalpataru on vrata (pp 180-181) quotes the Bhaviṣya Purāna (Brahmaparva 197:1-11) for stating the consequences of using various flowers in worship, viz. worship with *malati* flowers leads the worshipper in the presence of god, worship with *karavīra* flowers confers health and incomparable prosperity, by the flowers of *Mallika* the worshipper becomes endowed with all pleasures, with *pundarika* (lotuses) he secures bliss and lasting wealth, with flowers of the fragrant *kubjaka* he secures highest prosperity. With lotuses (white and blue) he secures spotless fame, with various *mukurakās* (*Jasmimum zambac*) he is freed from disease, worship with *Mandara* flowers destroys all kinds of leprosy, and with *bilva* flowers he obtains wealth, with *arka* flowers the Lord Sun confers blessings, with a garland of *bakula* flowers the worshipper has a beautiful daughter, the Sun worshipped with *Kimśuka* flowers does away with trouble, with *Agastya* flowers the Deity gives success and worship with lotuses gives a beautiful wife, with *vanamāla* the worshipper becomes free from tiredness, the worshipper of the Sun with *Arka* flowers makes no mistakes and the Sun worshipped with *japa* (china rose) flowers frees the worshipper from trouble.

About *dhūpa* (incense burnt in worship) a good deal is said in the digests. The Kalpataru (on vrata. pp. 182-183)⁸⁹ observes as follows:— “The Sun comes near (i.e. favors) a worshipper who burns sandalwood and confers desired objects, when one burns *agar* as *dhūpa*, one who desires health should burn *guggulu*, the Sun is always pleased by the use of *pindānga* (i.e. silhaca) and confers health, wealth and the highest bliss; a man secures blessedness by using *kundaka* (the exudation of *sallaki*) as *dhūpa*, and trade becomes fruitful by using *srivāsaka* (*sarala*) as *dhūpa* and one gets wealth by burning *rasa* (myrrh) and *sarjarasa* (resin of the sal tree). Hemādri (on vrata.) vol. I pp 50-51, Kṛtyaratnākara p 78 quote several verses from the Bhaviṣya Purāna defining *dhūpas* called ‘*amṛta*’, ‘*ananta*,’ *yakṣānga*, *mahānga*. The Bhaviṣya Purāna 911 remarks that *jātī* is the best among flowers *kundaka* is the best *dhūpa*, saffron is best among fragrant substances, sandalwood among unguents; ghee is best for lighting lamps and *modaka* sweets among naivedya foods. It may be noted that the burning of *guggulu* and other substances had a practical end in view, viz. the destruction of fleas and bees.

9. Feeding People in Vratas

It is no doubt that we find in most vratas Brāhmaṇas are to be fed, but one should not run away with the idea that the blind, the poor and the helpless were altogether forgotten. In the case of many vratas it is expressly provided that food should be given to the blind, the poor and the helpless. In describing the *Aviyoga-vrata*, both the Kalpataru (on vrata p. 75) and Hemādri quote a long passage from the Kalika Purāna in which it is provided that on the day of the vrata tasteful and well-flavored food and drink without stint should be distributed to the helpless, the blind and the deaf.⁷

The Bhaviṣya (Uttara, 22 33-34:) recommends that one observing a vrata should provide food for the blind, the distressed and the helpless according to his means. As in the case of śrāddhas, particularly at Gaya, the Purānas often enjoin lavish expenditure on vratas and condemn stinginess or spending less on them than one is able to spend.⁸

In respect of Aviyoga-vrata the Kalikā-Purāna provides 'the performer free from trickiness about wealth should give an equivalent to the Brāhmaṇas or the couple if he is unable (to give pearls and precious stones)'.

10. Virtues to be cultivated

There are certain virtues that the person undergoing a vrata has to cultivate. The Agni Purāna speaks of ten virtues that must be cultivated as common to all vratas viz. forbearance, truthfulness, compassion, charity, purity (of body and mind), curbing the organs of sense, worship of deities (or images), oblations into fire, contentment, not depriving another of his property. This ten-fold dharma is declared as common to all vratas. Devala prescribes:—

‘brahmācārya (celibacy) purity, truthfulness and giving up of flesh-eating — these four are the highest (virtues) in vratas. Brahmācārya is lost by staring at (strange) women, touching them and engaging in talk with them but not by sexual intercourse with one's wife during the allowed days after her monthly illness.’

The Naradiya Purāna remarks —

“brahmācārya is prescribed for being observed in all vratas and it is declared that generally sacrificial food (*Haviṣyanna*) is eaten.”

11. Sacrificial Food

Haviṣyanna is variously defined. Manu 98 says—

'the food proper for hermits (such as *nivāra*), milk, juice of soma plant, flesh that has

⁷ Vide also Kalpataru (on vrata) p 390 (on Harivrata), p. 391 (on Pātravrata), p 397 (Mahāvratā), Hemādri and Kṛtyaratnākara p 481 on Śiva-rātri-vrata, Kṛtya-ratnākara p 481 (on Mitra Saptami).

⁸ Vide Matsya 100:36 The Bhaviṣyottara. 95 on Ubhaya-dvādaśī vrata states ‘the performer of Ubhaya-dvādasi-vrata being solely devoted to Kṛṣṇa should not be tricky (spend less) in spending wealth’.

not become putrid, and a *kṣira-lavana* (natural salt) these are declared to be (fit) sacrificial food by nature'.

Though flesh was offered in śrāddhas in the times of the several early smritis such as that of Yājñavalkya, flesh must be excluded from the list of proper foods in the case of vratas owing to the express provisions contained in Devala-smṛti (cited above) and others.⁹

The Kṛtyaratnākara 9.1 quotes a long passage from the Samaya-pradīpa on what food should be partaken in vratas viz.

‘first come *yavas* (barley) on failure of them ‘*vṛihi*’ (rice), on failure of this, other food except *māṣa* (black beans), *kodrava*, gram, *masura* (a kind of pulse), *cīna* and *kapittha*.’

There are somewhat conflicting passages in the several Purānas about the foods that are acceptable or should be rejected. For example, the Agni Purāna (in 175. is) first states that *kṣāra*, *lavana*, honey and flesh should be eschewed in vrata, then (in 175 13-14:) includes among *kṣāra* all cereals in pods except sesame and *mudga*, and among corn, wheat and kodravas and several others are included in *kṣāra* group (i.e. they are to be eschewed in vrata) and proceeds with: ‘rice, *sastika* (corn that ripens in sixty days from the date of Sowing), *mudga*, *kalāya* (peas), sesame and *yava*, *śyāmaka* (millet), *nivāra* (Wild rice grains), ‘Wheat and others are beneficial (i.e. allowed) in vratas, while one should give up (in vrata) *kusmāṇḍa* (pumpkin gourd), *alābu* (bottle gourd), *vārtāka* (egg plant), *pālankī* (a kind of vegetable) and *pūtikā*. The Padma Purāna provides that one who is observing *nakta-vrata* must observe six things, viz *haviṣya* meals, bath, truthfulness, small quantity of food, worship of Agni and sleeping on the ground (not on a cot).

The Bhujabala says that everyone should avoid, while observing vrata, the use of bell metal (vessel), meat, masura, gram, kodrava, vegetables, honey and the food cooked in another's house. Harita lays down what should be avoided on the day of vrata: —

“one should avoid on the fast day conversation with one guilty of heavy sins, heterodox sectarians and atheists and speaking what is untrue and obscene.”

The Śāntiparva says — “one engaged in vrata should not converse with women, sūdras and *patita*.”

The Brhadyogi-Yajñavalkya smṛti observes:—

“one should not talk at the time of japa or vrata or homa and the like to women, Śūdras, *patita*, sectarians, a woman in her period; if there be a failure in the restraint of speech (with these) in japa and the rest, he should recite a mantra addressed to Viṣṇu or remember Viṣṇu who is imperishable.”

⁹ Vide H of Dh.S. Vol. 4. p149 n 343 for *haviṣyanna* food.

12. Glorification of Vratas

The Purānas extol, as in the case of pilgrimages, the performance of vratas to the skies. Certain vratas like those to be undergone by a Vedic student had ceased to be in vogue and vratas associated with Vedic sacrifices also had become rare in the centuries before the Christian era. In the Grhya and Dharma sūtras and in ancient smṛtis like those of Manu and Yajñavalkya what were called *vratas* in the Purānas did not occupy any very prominent position. During the early centuries of the Christian era, Buddhism and Jainism were influential rivals of the ancient sacrificial system. In order to wean away common people from those two Schisms it is very probable that learned followers of the Vedic system hit upon the glorification of vratas and promised heaven and otherworldly and spiritual rewards to those who performed vratas that were comparatively easy and within reach of all instead of sacrifices and also adopted some of the practices of common folks as vratas.¹⁰

Hyperbolic statements:-

The Brahma-Purāna says the reward that is secured by the worship of the Sun for a single day cannot be secured by hundreds of Vedic sacrifices or by Brāhmaṇas to 'Whom the fees stated in the texts are paid.' The Padma Purāna extols Jayantī-vrata by saying that in the body of the man who performs it all holy places and deities reside. The Garuḍa-Purāna quoted by Hemādri states that the Kañcanapurī-vrata described by it is more purifying than even the Ganges, Kurukṣetra, Kāśī and Puskara. The Bhaviṣya-Purāna. (Uttara 7:1) provides that a man crosses easily the deep ocean of hells by means of the boat of vratas, *upavāsas* and *niyamas*. In the Mahābharata (and the Padma Purāna VI 53:11) it is stated that the Vedic rites and rites prescribed by Manu cannot be performed in Kali-yuga and that therefore it declares to Yudhisthira something that would be an easy remedy, requiring little wealth and causing little trouble but securing great rewards and that would be the essence of Purānas, viz. one should not eat on the Ekādaśī of both fortnights; he who does not eat food on Ekādaśī does not go to hell. About the Ubhaya-dvādaśī vrata described in the Bhaviṣya Purāna it is said that Prabhāsa, Gaya, Puskara, Varanasi, Prayaga or holy places to the east or west thereof, or to the north are not superior or equal to the Kārtika vrata.

The Anusasana-parva proclaims that there is no higher tapas than *upavāsa* (fasting) or even equal to it and that poor men can secure the rewards of sacrifices by resorting to the *upavāsa* described. Hemādri quotes two verses on Arka-vrata from the Bhaviṣya Purāna stating that if one observes for a year *nakta* on the 6th and 7th tithis in each fortnight one obtains the merit secured by those who perform the Vedic sacrifices called *sattras* or who observe the vow of speaking the truth.

¹⁰ E.g. *kukkuti-markati-vrata* in Bhavisyottara 4:6. 1-4:3, *Sitalā-vrata* (Vratārka. folio 111 b -113 b. N. B. p US).

In the Varāha Purāna the question that asked is:— 'how can a poor man reach God' and the reply is that he can do so by vratas and fasts. The Liṅga Purāna (purvārdha. 83:4) provides that one who for a year observes *nakta* (eating only once in the evening) and worship of Śiva on the 14th and 8th tithis in each pakṣa (fortnight) secures the reward of all sacrifices and reaches the highest goal.

The Bhaviṣya asserts that Brāhmaṇas who have no sacred fires (śrauta or smārta) benefit in this way that gods become pleased with them by (the observance of) vratas, fasts, restrictive rules of conduct and various kinds of gifts, particularly by a fast on special tithis.

The keynote struck by the Matsya, Brahma and other Purānas is how to secure great rewards with little effort. The Brahma-Purāna remarks that by merely taking in Kali-yuga the name of Keśava one obtains the same rewards that one got in Kṛta-yuga by deep meditation in Treta-yuga by performing sacrifices and in Dvāpara by worship (of images).

The Matsya says:—

“The great sages do not commend sacrifices which involve killing (of animals); those whose wealth is *tapas* became firmly placed in heaven by making gifts, according to their means, of particles of grains (collected from fields &c) roots, fruits, vegetables and water vessels and that tapas is superior for (several) reasons to sacrifices.”

The Padma-Purāna reaches the peak of exaggeration when it says:— ‘no one except Hari will be able to recount the merit of him who offers a lamp on the day of Hari in Kārtika with devotion' or ‘Viṣṇuvrata is the highest, a hundred solemn Vedic sacrifices are not equal to it'.

The Skanda Purāna 112 (quoted by Hemādri on vrata vol. 1pp.318-321) contains a long eulogy of vrata, one verse of which may be cited here:—

‘Gods attained their position through restrictive observances (vratas) they shine forth as stars by virtue of the vratas (they performed)'.

13. Types of Vratas

There were certain differences between Vedic yajñas and vratas. The promised reward of most yajñas was heaven, while Purānas promised that most vratas would confer tangible benefits in this very life. Further, vratas could be performed by all, including sūdras, maidens, married women, widows, even prostitutes.

There were vratas for the brahmacarin (called *Veda-vratas*) and for the snātaka.¹¹ That vratas (in the medieval sense) existed even in the first centuries before and after the Christian era follows from the Ap. Dh. S. and from the dramas of Kalidasa, from the Mrcchakatika and the Ratnāvali. The Ap. Dh. S n.

¹¹ These have been already dealt with in H.of Dh. vol. II pp. 370-374 and pp 412-415 respectively.

818 prescribes a vrata for one year which is equal in its merit to brahmacāri vrata for 48 years and Ap. Dh. S 11.8 18-19 to Ap Dh S n.8 20 prescribe two modes of a vrata to be started on Tīṣya (Puṣya) nakṣatra to be observed by a person desirous of prosperity.¹²

In the Sakuntala (Act II) the dowager queen (mother of Dusyanta) sends a message that on the 4th day from the date of the message her fast (*vrata*) would end. The Vikramorvasiya (III) appears to refer to a vrata called in later times *Rohini-candra-śayana-vrata*.¹³ It may be noted that in the above works royal ladies are described as observing vratas. In the Raghuvamsa Kalidasa alludes to an *Āsidhara-vrata* (XIII. 67) The Mrcchakatika (Act I) speaks of an *upavāsa* (a vrata) called *Abhirūpapati* which appears to have been somewhat like the *Bhartr-prāpti-vrata* described by Hemādri. The Ratnāvali (Act I at end) describes *Madana-mahotsava* which reminds us of the same described in Hemādri (Vol. II pp 21-24)

It appears, however, that the number of vratas in the first centuries of the Christian era was not very large Gradually, however, the number of vratas increased by leaps and bounds and their total number as seen from the list furnished at the end of this section, would be in the region of one thousand one of the earliest digests on tithis and asks astrological matters in relations Dharma-śāstra is the Rājamārtāṇḍa of king Bhoja (1st half of 11th century A.D.) It mentions only a few vratas (about 24). The next important extant work is the Kṛtya-kalpa-taru of Lakṣmidhara (1st half of 12th century A.D.) who mentions in the Vratakāṇḍa about 175 A comparatively later work viz. the Vrata-kālaviveka of Sulapani (1375-1430 A D.), which discusses the rules about the proper times for observing vratas, mentions only 11 vratas.

Hemādri's is the largest published work on vratas, containing as it does about 2200 printed pages in the B.I. edition. It deals with about 700 vratas. This shows that towards the end of the 13th century, when Muslim invaders had seized the larger part of India and were ruthlessly razing temples to the ground and converting by force and fraud thousands to their faith, the men of the day, both learned and ignorant were expending vast intellectual labor and huge sums of money on vratas, pilgrimages and śrāddhas, blissfully ignorant of and blind to the political and religious dangers that engulfed them all.

The Vrata-kośa lists 1622 vratas, but that list is unduly swollen and inflated for various reasons.¹⁴ For example, the Aṣṭaki-Srāddhas and Anvaṣṭaki-Srāddhas are included and have nine numbers assigned to them. There are twelve numbers

¹² Vide S B E vol n pp 14:5148 Hemādri (vrata n p 628 quotes Ap Dh S n 8, 20 3-9), explains the sutras and calls this Apastambokta Puṣyavrata

¹³ vide Hemādri vol. II pp 599-600

¹⁴ It has to be remembered that several different vratas are mentioned under the same name also that different names are given to the same vrata and that some times, utsavas and sutras also are described in works on vratas.

assigned to *Ananta-vrata* because it is performed for twelve months from Margasīrsa, but Hemādri treats it as one vrata¹⁵. *Upavāsa vrata* is given four numbers, the only reference given being Hemādri.

14. Breaking a Vrata

When a person undertakes a vrata he must see to it that he finishes it, for dire consequences are laid down for him who gives it up through heedlessness. Chāgaleya declares —

‘when a person, having first undertaken a vrata, does not carry it out, being led away by some desire, he while alive becomes (i.e. is to be treated as) a caṇḍāla and after death becomes a dog’.

In such a case where through greed, infatuation or inadvertence one is guilty of breaking a vrata, he has to undergo three days' fast and also shave his head and then begin the vrata (the remainder acc to Nirṇayasindhu, the whole of it acc to Sulapani). The Varāha Purāna states:—

‘that man who undertakes a vrata on ekādasi day but does not, owing to foolishness, finish it, reaches a very evil state’.

Death in the midst of a vrata did not deprive the performer of the merit for which he began it Angiras provides:—

‘If a person that has begun some religious act for some benefit dies before the rite is finished, he secures the merit that is the reward (of that act) after his death, Manu so declared’.

No one should undertake a vrata in the midst of *aśauca* (impurity on birth and death). But it is provided by the Viṣṇu-dharma-sūtra (22 49) that *aśauca* does not affect the king in doing his royal duties, nor those undergoing a vrata in the carrying out of the vrata. Similarly, Laghu-Viṣṇu observes —

“in the case of vratas, yajñas, marriages, in śrāddha, homa, worship (of an image), in Japa, impurity does not affect after they are begun, but it affects before they are begun (i.e. is an obstacle to beginning these after impurity)”

Yaj. III 28-29 are similar verses it is laid down in the Sāstras that danger (to the observer of vrata) from all beings, disease, forgetfulness, the command of one's guru do not break a vrata provided these occur only once (during the period of the particular vrata.). It is provided by the Matsya-Purāna, Agni and Satyavrata that in the case of women that have commenced a vrata of long duration there is no stoppage of the vrata if they have monthly illness in the midst of the vrata they become pregnant or are delivered of a child and that they should get the rites performed by another as long as they are impure, but physical acts (such as fasting) may be done by them.

There are certain other matters that do not affect the observance of a vrata, viz. (drinking) water, (partaking of) roots, fruits and milk and sacrificial offering, the

¹⁵ on vrata vol II. pp. 667-671

desire (or command) of a Brāhmaṇa, the order of one's guru and medicine. Hemādri remarks that the drinking of milk and the rest that follow do not affect vrata if the performer is a woman, a child or one who is in extreme pain. A person observing vrata, should eschew all this, viz. anointing the body or the head with oil, chewing betel, applying sandalwood paste and whatever else would increase physical strength or passion.

Another remarkable matter is that the Mahābharata provides that Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas should not engage in a continuous fast for more than three days and that Vaiśyas and Śūdras can observe a continuous fast for two days only and a fast for three days is not laid down for these two classes by those who know dharma.

CHAPTER 2

1. Persons entitled to engage in Vratas

One important matter is that of *vratādhikāriṇaḥ* (person entitled to engage in a vrata). Persons of all castes including Śūdras are entitled to perform vratas. Devala states —

“there is no doubt that all varṇas are released from sins by observing vratas, fasts and restrictive rules of behavior and by mortification (lit heating) of the body.”

Women are also entitled to perform vratas. In fact the Purānas and digests prescribe several vratas for women alone. Manu, Viṣṇu Dharma, and several Purānas provide that a woman cannot perform a separate yajña, a separate vrata or a separate fast by herself, she is honored in heaven by waiting upon her husband. Viṣṇu Dh. S. (25 16)¹²⁵ further provides that a woman who observes a vrata in which a fast is involved while her husband is alive deprives her husband of his life and herself goes to hell. Whatever act of benefit in the other world a woman does without the consent of her father, husband or son yields no fruit to her. The medieval digests interpreted these verses as meaning that before performing a vrata, a maiden has to secure the consent of her father, a married woman of her husband and a widow of her son and that with the consent of the persons specified a woman could perform an independent vrata for herself. The Liṅga Purāna provides with the bidding (i.e. permission) of their husbands, women could perform Japa, gifts, tapas and all else; opinion was divided whether a woman could get homa performed through another.¹⁶

2. Pratinidhi — “Power of Attorney”

The Vyavahāra-mayūkha following Parasara held that a Śūdra could get the homa in adoption performed through a Brāhmaṇa and that the same rules apply to women and Śūdras and therefore a woman could get a homa required in vrata performed through a Brāhmaṇa. Rudradhara (author of Suddhi-viveka) and Vācaspati held that a woman and a Śūdra have no right to perform homa with Vedic mantras. The Nirṇaya-sindhu supports the Vyavahāra-mayūkha on the question of homa in a vrata to be observed by a woman. (But it appears that Nilakantha, author of the Vyavahāra-mayūkha, was of a different opinion when composing the Prāyaścitta-mayūkha.)

It is provided in the Matsya that a woman who is pregnant or is recently delivered of a child should only observe *nakta* instead of a fast and a maiden or

¹⁶ About the incapacity of women for mantras vide Manu II.66; IX.18 and Yāj I:13

other female who is impure (through menstruation or otherwise) should get her vrata performed through another, but, whether pure or impure, she may perform bodily acts (such as a fast) by herself.

If a person is unable owing to disease or accident or the like to perform a vrata personally he could get it performed through a *pratinidhi* (a representative). Certain rules well laid down about this. It is stated in the Satyāsādha-srauta-sūtra, 133 —

“there is no *pratinidhi* (representative or substitute) in the case of the patron (the Yajamana), the wife, the son, the (proper) place and time (for an act), the fire, the deity (to be invoked such as Agni, Indra &c), a rite and a text (to be prescribed for being employed in a rite).”

All religious acts are arranged in three classes, viz. *nitya* (obligatory'), *naimittika* (to be performed when a certain *nimitta* or occasion arises or event happens) and *kāmya* (performed out of a desire to secure some object).

The Trikaṇḍa-mandanam has the following rules about *pratinidhi*,

“in these three kinds of acts no *pratinidhi* (substitute) is allowed in the case of *kāmya* rites, a substitute is allowable in the case of *nitya* and *naimittika* rites some recognized a substitute even in a *nitya* rite after it is once begun there is no substitute for a mantra or the deity or the fire (Garhapatya, Ahavaniya or Dakṣinagni) a *kriyā* (such as *prayāja*) or *īśvara* (the *svāmin* or *yajamāna*) some say that a substitute is not allowed in the case at (a prescribed) place or time. An aghotrin can substitute, (if his wife is dead etc.) an image of her made of gold or kuśas but a woman cannot proceed with a rite putting forward some substitute or effigy in place of the husband.’

If a person is unable, after undertaking a vrata, to carry it out, he should get it done by a representative. Such representatives are:— son, wife, brother, husband, a sister, a pupil, purohita (for dakṣina) and a friend. Paithinasi states that a wife might carry on the vrata undertaken by the husband and the husband may do so for the wife. If both are unable, a stranger may carry it out in this way there is no break of vrata Katyāyana says :—

‘one who observes a fast for the sake of his father or mother, brother, husband and particularly for his guru secures one hundred-foldment, if a person observes a fast on Ekādaśī in place of his maternal grand-father and the like they and their representative each obtain the full fruit thereof.

These rules about *pratinidhi* apply to all varnas.

3. Vratas and non-aryas

It is somewhat remarkable that the Vratārka quotes from Hemādri a passage of the Devī Purāna to the effect that even *mlecchas* were authorized to perform vratas, if they had faith in them. In the Śānti-parva (65 13-25) Indra is made to say to king Mandhiti that even Yāvanas (Greeks), Kirāṭas, Gāndhāras, Cīnas,

Śabaras, Sakas, Andhras and several others should serve their parents, they could perform vratas laid down in the Veda, they could make offerings to their (deceased parents), may dig wells (for the use of all people) and may make gifts to Brāhmaṇas. The Bhaviṣya-Purāna states that the Haihayas, Talajanghas, Turks, Yavanas and Sakas desiring to reach the status of Brāhmaṇas observed fasts on the first *tithi* (pratipad).

4. Objects gained by means of Vratas

The bulk of the vratas practiced in medieval and modern times are *kāmya* i.e. performed for the purpose of securing some object in this world or sometimes the next world or both. Most of the vratas are really secular though under the garb of religion and, though certain disciplines (such as fast, worship and celibacy, truthfulness) have to be observed. breathe a frankly materialistic attitude they are meant to appeal to the ordinary human cravings that rule the whole world. The desired objects are legion and it is impossible to set them out in detail. Some idea about them may however be conveyed.

The Agni-Purāna mentions dharma (*puṇya*), progeny, wealth, beauty or good fortune, virtues, fame, learning, long-life, wealth, purity, enjoyment of pleasures, heaven and mokṣa (release from the round of births and deaths) as the objects to be sought by the observance of vratas.

The Kalpataru on vrata says that vrata is the highest means of securing the seven lokas (such as Brahmaloḥa, Śivaloḥa, Vaikuntha) and the enjoyment of pleasures and triumph that in Kṛta, Tṛeta, Dvāpara and Kali ages respectively kings Sujaya, Rāma, Dhanañjaya and Vikrama became lords of the whole world by means of Vratas, that Sankara declared to Hari in various treatises that vrata is the one (supreme) observance for man, that though many observances are laid down in each yuga they do not come up even to the 16th part of observance of vratas, that the virtuous attained mokṣa through vratas and that gods, sages, siddhas and others obtained the highest perfection by means of *upavāsas* (fasts).

5. Classification of Vratas

As the vratas to be treated of in this section are almost all self-imposed or voluntary, they may be divided into classes. The Padma-purāna observes:

“*ahimsa* (abstaining from causing injury), truthfulness not depriving a person of his property by wrongfully taking it, *brahmācārya* (continence), freedom from crookedness or hypocrisy — these are mental vratas that lead to the satisfaction (or favor) of Hari; eating once only in the day, *nakta* (eating only once after sunset), fast (for the whole day), not begging (i.e. subsisting on food that one gets without asking for it) — this is physical vrata for human beings; study of the Veda, recounting (the names of) Viṣṇu, speaking the truth, freedom from backbiting those are vratas of speech.”

Another classification can be based on the time for which a vrata may last, i.e. only for a day or a fortnight (*pakṣha*), a month, season, *ayana* (time of the stay of the Sun in the northern or southern hemisphere), year, or years. A vrata may be for one year or for more than one or for a person's lifetime.

In speaking of vratas performed in a certain month, the question of an intercalary month will have to be considered and will be dealt with in the next section on Kāla etc. Similarly the matter of tithis occupies a very large place works on dharma-śāstra and will have to be discussed. The subject of kāla and Muhūrta will be dealt with in the next section. Though tithis properly pertain to that section, they will be dealt with here, since tithis are the most important topic in relation to the various observances that are to be performed throughout a year as their basis.

The largest number of vratas are *tithi-vratas*. It is therefore that Hemādri begins his treatment of individual vratas with *tithi-vratas* and passes on in order to *vāra-vratas*, *nakṣatra-vratas*, *yoga-vratas*, *karaṇa-vratas*, *saṅkrānti-vratas*, *māsa-vratas*, *ṛtu-vratas*, *samvatsara-vratas* and ends with *prakirṇaka* (miscellaneous) vratas.

The Kṛtya-kalpataru (on vrata) on the other hand begins with *vāra-vratas* then deals with *tithi-vratas*, *nakṣatra-vratas*, *māsa-vratas*, *sankrānti-vratas*, *samvatsara-vratas* and then with *prakirṇa-vratas*.

Most of the works on vrata after dealing with some general matters begin their treatment of vratas with *tithi-vratas*. The Samaya-pradīpa has a different mode of treatment, viz. that it begins with Ganeśa-vratas (i.e. vratas in which Ganeśa is the deity) then with vratas in which the Sun is the deity, then Śiva-vratas, Viṣṇu-vratas and so on. Some vratas are performed not only on a certain tithi but also require the existence of a certain month or weekday or nakṣatra or all of these.

Another classification may be based on the persons competent to perform vratas most vratas are meant for all men and women some like Haritālīka and Vaṭa-sāvitrī are meant for women alone some are to be performed by men alone while there are others to be performed only by kings or kṣatriyas or by vaiśyas.

4. Literature on Vratas

There is an immense literature on vratas. Some of the Purānas contain thousands of verses on vrata. For example, the Brahma Purāna of the Bhaviṣya Purāna contains aver 7500 verses and the Uttarakhaṇḍa of the same Purāna over five thousand verses on vratas in the Matsya Purāna has about 1230 verses on vrata, the Varāha Purāna spends about 700 verses and the Viṣṇudharmottata about 1600 verses on vratas. On a modest calculation the Purānas contain about 25,000 thousand verses at least on vratas.

It is difficult to draw a strict line between *vratas* and *utsavas*. What are called

utsavas have also an element of religious rites and conversely many *vratas* have some element of being a festival in this work I have included several observances which some people may regard as purely *utsavas* and not *vratas* at all.

The topic of *vratas* is rather inextricably mixed up with discussions on *Kāla* and *tithi*. The *nibandhas* (commentaries and digests) on *vratas* are numerous. In this section I shall mention works that deal with *vratas* alone or with *vratas* in relation to *tithis*, but not works on *kāla* in general and *Muhūrta*.

A verse in the *Kāla-viveka* of *Jimutavahana* names seven predecessors that had expounded *kāla* in relation to religious rites, viz. *Jitendriya*, *Sankhadhara*, *Andhaka*, *Sambhrama*, *Harivamśa* and *Yogloka*. Some of these writers must have been earlier than the first half of the 11th century A.D. But the works of all those seven writers on *kāla* have not yet been discovered.

Two other works ascribed to king *Bhoja* of *Dhārā* dealt among other matters with *kāla* and *vratas* (in the 2nd quarter of the 11th century). One of them, the *Rājamartaṇḍa*, is available in *Mss* and, besides expounding the astrological significance of *tithis*, week days, *nakṣatras*, *Yogas*, deals with several *vratas* and the proper times for them viz. *Ekādaśi*, *Saptamyarka-vrata*, *Agastyārghya-dāna*, *Śrāvana-dvādaśi*, *Rohinyasṭami*, *Haritāli-caturthi*, *Durgotsava*, *Kaujāgara*, *Preta-caturdaśi*, *Sukha-ratri*, *Bhrātr-dvītīya*, *Dīpa-dāna*, *Kārtika-snāna*, *Māgha-snāna*, *Maghi-saptami*, *Bhismaṣṭami*, *Puṣya-dvādasi*, *Aśokastamī*, *Caitrāvalī*, *Sāvitri-vrata*, *Pāsāna-caturthī*. *Aranya-ṣaṣṭhi*, *Daśahāra*, *Sankrānti*.¹⁷

It must be emphasized here that this section is concerned with the *vratas*

¹⁷ Apart from the Vedic Literature, *sūtras*, *epics*, *Purānas* and *Rājamārtāṇḍa*, I mainly rely in this section on *vratas* on the following works (those that I consulted in *ms* form being expressly indicated and the works being arranged in logical order as far as possible) *Kṛtya-kalpataru* (portion on *vratas*) of *Lakṣmidhara*, *Kālaviveka* of *Jimutavahana*, *Hemādri's Caturvarga-cintamani* (on *Vrata*) *Samaya-pradīpa* of *Sridatta* (*ms*) *Kṛtya-ratnākara* of *Candesvara Kāladarsa* of *Adityasuri* (*ms*). *Kāla-nirṇaya* or *Kāla-madhava* and *Kāla-nirṇaya-kārikā*. *Tithi-viveka*, *Vrata-kāla-viveka* and *Durgotsava-viveka* of *Sūlapāni*; *Nirṇayamṛta* of *Allādanātha*, *Varṣa-kriya-kaumudī* of *Govinda Nandā*; *Kālasāra* of *Gadadhara*; the *Tithi-tattva*, *Ekādaśi-tattva*, *Janmaṣṭami tattva*, *Durgārcana-paddhati*, *Kṛtyatattva* and *Vratatattva* of *Raghunandāna*. *Vrata-prakāśa* (part of *Viramitrodaya*) of *Mitramisra* (*mss*. from *Anupa Sanskrit Library*) and *Samaya-prakāśa* (part of *Viramitrodaya*), *Samaya-mayūkha* or *Kāla-mayūkha* of *Nilakantha*; *Vratārka* of *Sankarabhatta*. (*mss*); *Tithyarka* of *Divākara*; *Daśa-nirṇaya* of *Hārta*. *Venkatanatha*; *Vratodyapana-kaumudī* of *Sankarabhatta Ghare*; *Vratarāja* of *Viśvanatha*; *Puruṣārtha-cintāmani* of *Viṣṇubhatta*; *Ahalya-kāmadhenu* (*ms* in *Scindia Oriental Institute*, 1767-1771 A D), *Dharma-sindhu* of *Kaśinātha*. Of these the most important for *vratas* are *Kṛtya-kalpa-taru* (from which even *Hemādri*, and *Kṛtya-ratnākara* borrow many passages), *Hemādri* on *vrata*, *Kāla-nirṇaya* of *Mādhava*, *Kṛtyaratnākara*, *Vrata-kaumudī*, the works of *Raghunandāna* and the *Nirṇaya-sindhu*.

Works like *Vratārka* and *Vratarāja* though exhaustive, borrow verbatim long passages from *Hemādri* and others. The treatment of *vratas* in several of the above-mentioned works is often uneven; for example, the *Varṣa-kriya-kaumudī* disposes of the observances of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd *tithis* in two pages (28-30) while it devotes twenty-two pages to *Ekādaśi* (pp 42-64).

described or mentioned in works on Dharmasūtra. No attempt is made here to include all vratas observed by women or by primitive tribes or by the illiterate people all over India or contained in works written in the several regional languages such as Bengali, Hindi or Marathi.¹⁸

5. Times for beginning Vratas

Apart from the vratas that have to be performed on certain fixed tithis or times elaborate provisions are made that vratas in general and several other religious rites are to be begun only at certain auspicious times or in certain astrological conditions. A few of these are set out here by way of sample.

Gargya says when Jupiter and Venus have set (i.e. are not observable owing to their being near the Sun in the sky) or when they are in the stage of being called *bāla* and *vrddha* and in an intercalary month one should not begin a vrata nor perform its *udyāpana* (the rite of closing a vrata). The childhood of Jupiter and Venus is a certain period after they set and senility (*vrddhatva* or *vārdhaka*) is a certain period preceding their setting. There is no unanimity on the length of these periods and the periods differ in different countries and also depend on whether there is a season of distress or difficulty, but Varāhamihira states the longest provided should be accepted.

The Rājamārtāṇḍa has several verses on this, one of which may be set out here:—

Venus is *bāla* for ten days when it rises in the west, but is *bāla* for three days after rising in the east. Venus is *vrddha* for one pakṣa (15 days) when it rises in the east, but is *vrddha* for five days before it sets in the west.

Gargya observes:—

Venus and Jupiter are (held to be *bāla*) in the Vindhya whether in the east or west for ten days, but for seven days in the country of Avanti (of which Ujjaini was capital), in the country of Vanga. (Bengal) and among Hūnas (they are *bāla*) respectively for six and five days.

It is further provided in the Devī Purāna that one should not undertake any religious act when Jupiter or Venus is in the sign of the Lion. Similarly, Lalla remarks that all (religious) actions are condemned when done in what is called *Gurvāditya* (that is when the Sun is in the house of Jupiter viz sign of Pisces and when Jupiter is in the house of the Sun, viz. Leo).

¹⁸ In this connection I may mention Prof B. K. Sarkar's work '*Folk element in Hindu culture*' and the paper on '*a study of vrata rites in Bengal*' contributed by Mr. S. R Dasus to '*Man in India*' (1952) vol. 32, pp 207-245. Some writers have already published works dealing with the observances of common people such as Mrs. Stevenson's '*Rites of the twice-born*', Underhill's '*Hindu religious year*', B A Gupte's '*Hindu holidays and ceremonials*', R. C Mukarji's '*Ancient Indian fasts and feasts*', Mr. Rigvedi's Marathi work on '*History of Aryan festivals*' (ed of 1924) in these books (except in the last and rarely in Underhill's) texts from Dharma Śāstra are generally conspicuous by their absence.

The Vratarāja remarks that one is to avoid Jupiter in Leo for religious acts only to the north of the Narmadi and elsewhere only in Simhāmsā (i.e. the first quarter of the nakṣatra Purva-phalguni).

The Ratnamālā provides that Monday, 'Wednesday, Thursday and Friday are auspicious (confer success) in all (religious) acts, but on Sunday, Tuesday and Saturday only such actions succeed as are expressly prescribed for performance on those days.

Bhujabala remarks that Tuesday is unfavorable for all auspicious acts but that it is commended for agriculture, study (of the Sāma-veda) and for battles.

The philosophical discussions on Time and on its division into year, *ayana* (the Sun's apparent motion in the two regions of the celestial sphere), *ritus* (seasons), *Māsa* (month), *pakṣa* (half month,) week, day etc. will be taken up in the next section. But the exact determination of the question as to the day on which a *tithi-vrata* is to be performed when the *tithi* spreads over two days occupies a very large space in works on dharma Śāstra.

6. Determination of Tithi

The word *tithi* by itself does not occur in the Rigveda and the other Vedic Samhitas but the idea must have been there even in the Rig-Veda.

Amāvāsyā is explained in later works as being of two kinds, viz. *Sinivālī* (day on which *Amāvāsyā* is conjoined with the 14th tithi) and *Kuha* (when *Amāvāsyā* is mixed with the first tithi of the next fortnight)

Similarly, *Paurṇamāsī* is of two kinds, *Anumati* (mixed with the 14th tithi) and *Rākā* (mixed with the Pratipad of the next pakṣa) in the Rigveda *Sinivālī* is raised to the position of a divinity, is described as the sister of the gods, offerings are made to her and she is implored to bestow progeny on the worshippers. The Br. Up VI. 4.21 implores *Sinivālī* and the *Aśvins* to implant an embryo in the wife. *Rākā* also is similarly treated in the Rig Veda. 32.4:-5=Atharva VII. 4:8.

Rig X 59. 6 and X. 167. 3 treat *Anumati* as a deity, prayers are offered to her to enable the worshippers to see the Sun going up and to bestow happiness and she is spoken of in the same breath with Soma, Varuna and *Brhaspati*. The Vaj. S. prays 'May *Anumati* approve to-day of our sacrifice'. It should be noted that the *Nirukta*. (11:29) holds a discussion on *Anumati* and *Rākā*, viz. the *Nairuktas* (etymologists) say that *Anumati* and *Rākā* are goddesses (wives of gods), while the *Yājñīkas* hold that they are two kinds of *Paurṇamāsī*; it is known (in *Sruti*) that the first *Paurṇamāsī* is *Anumati* and the later is *Rākā*. Similarly, the *Nirukta* holds a discussion on *Sinivālī* and *Kuhu* (XI. 31) The *Atharvaveda* (VI. II.3) mentions *Prajapati*, *Anumati* and *Sinivālī* together. The word *Kuhu* occurs in the *Atharvaveda* and is applied to a deity that is invoked to come to the sacrifice and to bestow on the worshipper wealth and a heroic son. In the *Tai. S.* 18.8.1 and

Sat. Br. IX. 5.1.38 mention is made of these four, viz. of Anumati, Rākā, Sinīvālī and Kuhu, as recipients of caru (oblation of boiled rice).¹⁹

The Sat. Br remarks —

“this king Soma i.e. the moon is the food of the gods when he (the moon) is not seen on this night either in the east or in the west, he comes to this world (i.e. the earth) and enters the waters and the herbs here, he is the wealth of the gods and their food when he dwells on this night together (with waters and herbs) it (that night) therefore is called Amāvāsyā.”

The Ait. Br. (40.5) states that on Amāvāsyā the moon enters the sun. The Āp. Dh. S. also echoes this idea that on the Amāvāsyā night the Sun and the Moon dwell together (are near each other). So Amāvāsyā is so called either because the moon was supposed to dwell together with waters and herbs on the earth that night or because the Moon dwells with the Sun on that night. *Darśa* has the same sense as Amāvāsyā and means 'the day on which the moon is seen by the sun alone (and by no one else).²⁰

Another tithi that is famous in the Vedic Literature is *Aṣṭaka* (8th tithi after the full moon in any month, but particularly in Magha) on which offerings were made to the pitrs (departed ancestors). Even in very remote times people could have easily marked the four main phases of the moon, viz. Full Moon, half moon (8th day thereafter when half of the moon's orb shines), Moon's total absence and 8th day thereafter and after noting these phases it must not have been very difficult to make close calculations about the periods intervening between the Full-moon and the half moon, the New moon and half moon. As a matter of fact the Tai. Br. expressly says that the moon is worn away on the 15th and becomes full on the 15th i.e. before the Tai. Br. it was well known that there were 30 lunar days (tithis) in a lunar month. It is stated in the Sat Br —

“the Joints of Prajapati, while he was engaged in creating beings, became loose (or collapsed) the *samvatsara* is indeed Prajapati and the joints of it (of samvatsara) are the two junctions of day and night, Paurṇamāsī, Amāvāsyā and the beginnings (first days) of the seasons.”

¹⁹ How these names were coined in the distant past is an insoluble riddle. Anumati can be derived from root *man*, but why the tithi of the Full Moon mixed with the 14th tithi was so called is more than anyone can say. Kuhu may be plausibly derived from *kuha* 'where' (as in Rig. 1:24 10, 10:40 2) as the day when the moon is invisible and when primitive people asked in wonder the question 'where does the moon go'. But Rākā and Sinīvālī defy attempts at any plausible etymology. Eminent philologists, instead of admitting ignorance, are not wanting, who following the traditions of the very ancient etymologist Yāska (who says in Nirukta 2:1 *na tvena na nirbrūyāt*), suggest that the word Sinīvālī is made up by combining the Babylonian-Akkadian word '*sin*' (meaning moon) with Dravidian '*vel*' (white light) 'Amāvāsyā.' (New Moon) is addressed as a deity by itself in the Atharva Veda 7:79 (84) 1-4, the first of which calls upon Amāvāsyā to come to the sacrifice and bestow wealth and a valiant son and the second of which hints at the derivation of the word from '*ami*' (meaning 'together' or 'home') and '*vas*' (to dwell).

²⁰ Names are sometimes given by contraries e.g. a fool is called a wise man or a brave person may be called 'timid' Amāvāsyā may have been called *darśa* because the moon is not seen that day (but would be visible the next day)

The words *Paurṇamāsi* and *Amāvāsyā* occur very frequently in the Atharvaveda, the Tai. S and other Vedic texts, though the two words do not occur in the Rig Veda. The Atharva Veda says that Paurṇamāsi was the first among days and nights and was worthy of sacrifice. The Sat. Br.165 has an interesting passage:—

“they (wise men) say that when a sacrificer dwells near his sacrificial fire, that is due to his thought that the gods will partake of his offerings, since they do not eat the offering of a sacrificer who does not abide by certain observances’.

There are references in Tai S. and the Brahmaṇa literature which show that in those ancient days the duration of tithis and therefore the actual position of the moon could not sometimes be very accurately determined beforehand. A man about to perform an Iṣṭi on New Moon (*darśeṣṭi*) does certain acts that are done on the day previous to Amāvāsyā such as using the sour curds from last night's milking for coagulating the sacrificial food (i.e. milk), separating the calves from the cows in the afternoon with a palāśa twig and taking some husked rice, he thinks, owing to cloudy weather or through miscalculation, that the moon would not be seen in the sky the next morning, does not actually set apart a few handfuls of husked rice (meant as *nirvāpa* for the gods) or sets them apart, then the next day the moon is seen in the sky (i.e. the next day is really 14th tithi instead of Amāvāsyā) it is then prescribed that he has to perform an expiatory rite called *Abhyuditeṣṭi*.

The Nirukta while deriving the word *atithi* applied to Agni in Rig V. 4. 5 gives two explanations, one of which is — ‘one who approaches the houses of others on special tithis’. Panini furnishes no sūtra relating to the word *tithi* but it is possible to argue that the affix *tīthe* which he mentions in explaining words like ‘*bahutītha*’ was a relic of the word *tithi*. Patañjali expressly mentioned Paurṇamāsi *tithi*.

From the above discussion it would be clear that the ideas and divergences of views about the proper tithis for certain religious acts existed in the Vedic times (at least before Ait Br.) three thousand years ago and that the word tithi itself must be held to have been in use about 800 BCE. if not earlier still.

Tithi is defined as the time or period required by the moon to gain twelve degrees on the sun. As the Surya siddhānta states —

‘*tithi* is the lunar day in which the moon leaving the sun (at the last moment of Amāvāsyā.), traverses twelve degrees (bhagas) towards the east every day.’

The moon's motion is irregular and therefore the moon traverses twelve degrees sometimes in 60 ghaṭikas, sometimes in more (up to about 65) and sometimes in less ghaṭikas up to about 54. The result is that one unit day may be co-terminus with one tithi, but often a unit day has two tithis i.e. in the morning it may be the 6th tithi, but in the afternoon, evening and night it may be the 7th it is possible that in a single civil day (from sunrise to sunrise) there may be three tithis e.g.

on Monday morning there may be only two ghaṭikas left of the 6th tithi, then the 7th tithi may be only 56 ghaṭikas in duration and then the 8th may follow for the last two ghaṭikas of that unit day conversely, a single tithi may touch three days. For example, the last two ghaṭikas of Monday may be the first two ghaṭikas of the 6th tithi, then the 60 ghaṭikas of Tuesday may be occupied by the 6th tithi and two more ghaṭikas (the last) of the 6th tithi may spread on to Wednesday morning. A unit day which spreads over three tithis is declared by the Rājamārtāṇḍa to be very holy (or auspicious) while on the other hand a tithi touching three days is said to be inauspicious for marriage, for marching on an invasion, for an auspicious religious act or an act meant to advance prosperity.

If a tithi begins immediately before sunrise or its beginning coincides with sunrise and ends after the following sunrise the name of the tithi (as pratipad, dvitiya or so on as the case may be) is coupled with both *divasas* (civil days) involved, so that two tithis of the same denomination appear one after another. This is called *vrddhi* of the particular tithi. If a tithi begins sometime after sunrise on one morning and ends before sunrise on the following day it cannot be coupled with any day and is therefore deleted or omitted in the pancanga (almanac) and there is *tithi-kṣaya*. As a tithi is normally shorter than the civil day *kṣaya* occurs more frequently than *vrddhi*.

Lords of Tithis

Among the earliest extant enumerations about *tithi-pati* (lords of tithis) is that in the Brhatsamhita of Varāhamihira (chap. 98. 1-2) which sets them out as follows (the tithis and their lords being mentioned in order) — 1st Brahma, 2nd Brahma. 3rd Hari, 4th Yama, 5th the moon, 6th Kartikeya, 7th Indra. 8th Vasus, 9th Nāgas, 10th Dharma. 11th Śiva, 12th Savitr, 13th Madana. 14th Kali, 15th Viśvedevas and of Amāvāsyā the pitrs. He further says that one should do on those tithis the acts that are appropriate to the lords of those tithis.

It appears that other writers differed somewhat from Varāhamihira. e.g. the Ratnamālā sets out the lords of tithis according to the Purānas as follows:— 1st Agni, 2nd Brahmā, 3rd Giriji, 4th Gaṇeśa, 5th Nagsas, 6th Viśākha (Skanda). 7th the Sun, 8th Śiva, 9th Durgā 10th Yama, 11th Viṣṇu, 12th Hari, 13th Madana, 14th Śiva, 15th the Moon. The Skanda Purāna (I. 1. 33. '18-82) states what tithis are specially deal' to what gods such as 8th and 14th to Śiva, 4th to Gaṇeśa, 9th to Caṇḍiki. The Garuḍa (1 137 16-19) and Narada-Purāna (1 56 133-135) specify what deities are to be worshipped on the tithis from the first to 15th

Varāhamihira divides tithis into five groups, viz. *Nandā*, *Bhadra*, *Vijayā* or *Jayā*, *Riktā* and *Pūrṇā* and states that on those tithis the acts that are appropriate or suited to the lords of the tithis should be done and become crowned with success and the fruits of actions done on these five classes at tithis yield results similar to their names. The same applies to Karaṇas and Muhūrtas.

Classification	Tithis	Augmentation
Nandā	1, 6, 11	Friday
Bhadra	2, 7, 12	Wednesday
Vijayā	3, 8, 13	Tuesday
Riktā	4, 9, 14	Saturday
Pūrṇa	5, 10, 15	Thursday

The method of reckoning time by tithis is a very early one and is indigenous to India. Though Western scholars have from time to time put forward various theories about the so-called Greek influence on Indian astronomy and astrology and about the Indian Nakṣatra system being borrowed from the Chinese (Biot) or from the Babylonians (Weber) or from the Arabs (Sedillot), no western scholar has had the courage, so far as I know, of alleging that the system of tithis is not indigenous but is borrowed from some non-Indian source.

Vidhis — Injunctions

Vedic (and Smṛti) injunctions (*vidhis*) are of two kinds;

- (1) those that urge a person to do a thing such as 'one should fast on Ekadasi in both pakṣas',
- (2) those that dissuade a person from doing something as in 'one should not eat food on Ekādaśī'. Tithis are thus an *aṅga* of the two kinds of injunctions.

According to Garga, tithi, nakṣatra and vāra (week day) are a means of *puṇya* (merit) and *pāpa* (demerit, sin) by being subsidiary to the principal rite prescribed, but they are not able to produce the above result independently.

Types of Tithis

Tithi is of two kinds, *pūrṇa* (complete or full) and *sakhaṇḍā*. When a single tithi covers the whole day from sun-rise for 60 *nāḍikas* (or *ghaṭikas*) the tithi is *pūrṇa* i.e. the tithi begins exactly at sunrise and ends with the next sunrise and is exactly 60 *ghaṭikas* in extent.

All others than this are *sakhaṇḍa*, these latter again are of two kinds *śuddhā* and *viddhā* (pierced by or intermixed with another). A *śuddhā* tithi is one that extends from sunrise to sunset or (in the case of some tithis like śivaratri) up till midnight other *sakhaṇḍa* tithis are called *viddhā*.

Vedha is of two kinds, *morning vedha* and *evening vedha* the former generally occurs when after 6 *ghaṭikas* from sunrise a tithi touches or gets merged with the next tithi, while the latter (*evening vedha*) generally occurs when a tithi touches another tithi 6 *ghaṭikas* before sunset. In the case of certain tithis the period prescribed may exceed six *ghaṭikas*.

When the tithi in question is 60 ghaṭikas in extent and begins with sunrise (i.e. when it is pūrṇa) there is no difficulty at all. When a tithi is *śuddhā* in the sense given by the Dharmasindhu then also there is generally no difficulty.

Pūrṇa	Begins at sunrise and ends at sunrise the following day.		
Sakhaṇḍa	Śuddha	Lasts from sunrise to sunset	
	viddha	Morning vedha	New tithi begins 6 ghatīs after sunrise
		Evening vedha	New tithi begins 6 ghatīs before sunset

Sruti says:— 'forenoon is for the gods, midday for men and afternoon for pitrs', Manu (IV. 152) says one should carry out morning duties, decorating the body, bath, brushing the teeth, applying collyrium to the eyes and worship of gods in forenoon alone.

Therefore all religious acts prescribed for being performed by day on certain tithis for gods must be begun in the morning even if the tithi is mixed with another on that day, but all vratas to be performed in the evening or night have to be performed on the tithi existing in the evening or night even though it may be mixed up (*Viddha*) with another night.

Another matter to be noted is that in both halves of the month all tithis may affect the previous tithi and following tithi by three Muhūrtas (i.e. 6 nāḍis or ghaṭikas). Some tithis produce *vedha* by a larger number of ghaṭikas e.g. the 5th makes ṣaṣṭhi affected by twelve nāḍis, 10th makes 11th viddhā by 15 nāḍis &c. Viddhā tithis are in some cases fit for performing religious acts, sometimes they are not. All rites of the śrauta or smārta type, vrata, dāna and every other act enjoined by the Veda do not yield proper reward as long as there is no determination of the tithi proper for it.

That tithi which covers up the time (such as morning), noon, whole day &c. at which a religious act is prescribed to be done is the proper one for that act.

The first principle to remember is that *Kāla* (the time prescribed for a rite) is not a mere detail, but it is a *nimitta* (an occasion) on the happening of which a rite is to be performed and that therefore what is done at some time other than the prescribed one is practically as good as not done.

There is a text of the Tai. S. II. 2. 5. 4: which indicates this principle about Kāla it says that person is excluded from the heavenly world, who desiring to perform the darśa-pūrnamāsa rites transgresses the time of full Moon or New Moon!

Hemādri strongly emphasizes the performance of rites on the proper time and states that a *gaunakāla*, is resorted to for escaping from the censure of *śiṣṭas* or for the solace of one's mind or because there is no other alternative if a tithi can be had on two days and at the required time or if it does not exist on both days at the time required or it extends only up to a part of the time for which it is required, then the decision is arrived at, as a general rule, by what is called '*yugma-vākya*'.

Yugma-vākya

Suppose, for example, that a vrata is to be performed at noon on a certain tithi, then that tithi may exist at noon on two days or suppose that the tithi begins one or two ghaṭikas after noon and ends on the next day one or two ghaṭikas before noon, then the decision as to which tithi (whether *pūrva-viddhā* or *parā-viddhā*) is proper for the act would have to be decided as a general rule by the *yugma-vākya*. The *yugma-vākya* may be defined as follows:—

“The pairs (or combinations) of the following tithis lead to great reward, viz. of the 2nd + 3rd tithis, of the 4th + 5th, of the 6th + 7th, of the 8th + 9th, of the 11th + 12th of the 14th + purnima (Full moon *tithi*) and of Amāvāsyā + the 1st. The reverse (i.e. combinations or pairs of other tithis) results in great loss, such combinations destroy all former (accumulated) merit.”

In these verses there are seven pairs and they are mutually applicable.

The question may be asked on what tithi a vrata prescribed for the 2nd tithi should be performed if the 2nd is combined with the first on one day (that is it is *pūrva-viddhā*) and is also combined with the 3rd on the next day (i.e. it is *para-viddhā*). The reply is as a primal rule the day on which the 2nd is combined with the 3rd tithi should be the proper one for the dvitiya vrata and not the day on which 2nd tithi is combined with the first similarly, in the case of a vrata to be performed on tritiya, if the 3rd tithi occurs on one civil day combined with the 2nd and on the next day it is combined with the 4th, then the proper day as a general rule for a tritiya-vrata is the one on which the 2nd and 3rd tithis are in combination and not the other day on which the 3rd and 4th tithis combine. The combinations of 1st and 2nd tithi, etc. are generally excluded as improper.

Exceptions

It may be stated here that the rules laid down in the above verses (of *yugma-vākya*) are riddled with exceptions. Some say that these rules apply only to tithis of the bright half and not to those of the dark half. But many works hold that the passage applies to tithis of the dark half also, since the express mention of *amavāsyā* in combination with *pratipad* is an indication in that direction it would be noticed that the *yugma-vākya* (even though held to be applicable to the dark half) does not refer to the first tithi of the dark half, the 10th and 13th tithis of both halves. Their combinations with the preceding or following tithis will be governed by express texts where available and by other considerations in other cases such as the verse 'in the bright half that tithi should be preferred which exists at the time the sun rises and, in the dark half, that tithi should be preferred which exists when the sun sets.

Another important rule is that where there are express texts prescribing a particular combination of *vrddha tithi* as more appropriate for a vrata or other

religious rite, that express rule prevails and not the rule derived from this *yugma-vākya*. For example it is laid down in the very place (where the *yugma-vākya* occurs) that the 6th tithi 8th tithi amāvāsya and the 13th of the dark half are to be preferred (for religious rites) when in combination with the following tithis (i.e. 7th, 9th, 1st of bright half and 14th of dark half respectively) and others (than those mentioned in the first half such as the 7th, 9th) are to be preferred when combined with those preceding them.

The application of special considerations may be further illustrated by the following. The same tithi may be preferred if *pūrva-viddhā* in one vrata and as *para-viddhā* in other cases owing to the difference in the deities of the vratas.

For example Skandaśaṣṭhi is preferred as *purva-viddhā* but Mandāra-śaṣṭhi is preferred as *para-viddhā* (because the deity is Mandāra and not Skanda) Sometimes although the devata is the same, it will have to be *pūrva-viddhā* and sometimes *para-viddhā* as in the Vinayaka-vrata which requires mid-day as the proper time. If the 4th exists at midday and then is mixed up with 5th, but did not exist at midday the previous day then 4th mixed with 5th will be preferred, but if mixed with the 3rd before noon and not mixed with 5th at time of midday, 4th mixed with third will be preferred.

Sometimes it depends on the fact whether it is bright or dark fortnight Śukla pratipad will be preferred if *purva-viddhā* but Kṛṣṇa pratipad will be preferred as *uttara-viddhā*.

The rites for pitrs are not governed by *yugma-vākya*. The grhya-parisista provides that the pitrs attend on that tithi which exists at the time when the sun sets that tithi and afternoon are assigned for the pitrs by Brahmā himself.

Sometimes even a combination not approved by *yugma-vākya* has to be accepted for the performance of a rite e.g. when Aṣṭami with Rohini nakṣatra exists (in kṛṣṇa-janma-vrata) the fast should be observed on that Aṣṭami, though it may be combined with 7th tithi (and not on 9th as *yugma-vākya* requires).

Sometimes, even though a tithi be *purnā*, it is passed over in favor of a *viddhā* one. Suppose there is Ekādaśī in the bright half from sunrise to sunrise on a certain day and there is Ekādaśī on the next day for two ghaṭikas, then there is dvādaśī for 59 ghaṭikas in extent: thus trayodasi commences the day after just one ghaṭika after sunset. According to this verse of Pracetas there is to be no upavāsa on the Ekādaśī, though it is pūrṇa, but the fast will be observed on Dvādaśī, and the *pāranā* in order to be celebrated on Dvādaśī will have to be during the first ghaṭikas of the third day from Ekādaśī or earlier. But if the Dvādaśī in this case be only for 55 ghaṭikas, trayodaśī will begin three ghaṭikas before sunrise if *pāranā* be done at sunrise it will be on the 13th and not on the 12th. In this latter case, according to Pracetas, the Upavāsa will have to be on the pūrṇa Ekādaśī in order that the *pāranā* may be on 12th.

It has to be further remembered that the positive prescription about celebrating a vrata or the like on the fixed tithi is governed by the *yugma-vākya*, but the rules forbidding the partaking of oil, meat or the like on the fixed tithi apply for the whole of that day and that tithi, whether it is 65 ghaṭikas and extends over three days or is only 55 ghaṭikas and extends over two days only.

For explaining the words '*ekādasyām nirāhāraḥ*' from Varāha Purāna (39. 32) the Ekādaśi-tattva (PP. 3-4) states that one is to fast not merely for the time that the Ekādaśi lasts on a week-day but for the whole of the week day on which Ekādaśi falls and it applies the reasoning contained in Jai VI. 2 19-20 (called *Kālañjādhikarana*).

If the vrata is such that some items in it are to be done by day and some at night, then that vrata must be observed on that tithi which exists by day as well as at night and in such a case the *yugma-vākya* has no application.

In certain cases where the vrata has several items extending over the whole day or a large part of it, the tithi at the time of sunrise even if it be only for a ghaṭika is declared by some texts to be *sakala* (pūrṇa) for purposes of both gifts and Vratas.

A general rule is stated in some works that when the full moon which is in the nakṣatra that gives the name to a month is in conjunction with Jupiter that tithi has the word *Mahā* prefixed to it. For example, the Purnima of Kartika would be called *Mahā-kārtikī* if the Moon and Jupiter are both in the Kṛttikis (Pleiades) on that tithi. The Rājamārtāṇḍa and Bhaviṣya Purāna provide that a bath on the Mahā-caitri and (on the remaining 11 purnimas with prefix *mahā*) in certain holy places yields great rewards, viz bath at Prayaga on Mahā-maghi, on Mahā-phalguni in the Naimisa forest, on Mahā-caitri at Sulagrama, on Mahā-vaiśākhī at Mahādvara, on Mahā-jyaiṣṭhi at Purusottama, on Mahā-siddhi at Kanakhala, on Mahā-śravani at Kedāra, on Mahā-bhadra at Badari, on Mahāśvini at Kubjāmra, on Mahā-kārtikī at Puskara, on Mahā-mārgaśīrsi at Kanyakubja, on Mahā-pauśi at Ayodhya.

Tithis and forbidden actions

There are long lists of actions forbidden on certain tithis. A few passages may be cited here.

Devala says:— 'on the 15th, the 14th and particularly on the 8th one should avoid oil, meat, sexual intercourse and the use of a razor.' The Naradiya Provides that one should give up oil on the 6th tithi, meat on 8th, use of razor on the 14th and sexual intercourse on the full moon and amavasya (I 156.140-141) Certain vegetables, fruits and articles such as sesame are to be eschewed on certain tithis.

CHAPTER 3

1. Individual vratas

The Mahābharata, prescribes how to set about a vrata:—

'Taking in one's hand a copper vessel full of water and turning one's face to the north one should undertake the *upavāsa* or whatever else he resolves in his mind to undertake as a vrata.'

Devala also says:—

'without taking food (the previous night), after taking a bath and having performed acamana (ceremonial sipping of water) and after having declared before the Sun and other devatas (his intent) a person should perform a vrata'.

The Varāha Purāna sets out the formula of saṅkalpa:—

ekādaśyāṃ nirāhāro bhūtvā caiva pare-hani |
bhokṣyehaṃ puṇḍarikākṣa śaraṇaṃ me bhavācyuta |

'after passing the 11th tithi without any food, I shall partake of food the next day, O lotus-eyed one (Viṣṇu), O Acyuta, be thou my refuge.'

The saṅkalpa is to be generally made in the case of a fast or vrata in the morning; the first 1/5 part of a day comprising three ghaṭikas is called morning. Even when a tithi does not begin in the morning (but begins in the afternoon) the saṅkalpa has to be made in the morning provided a vrata is to be performed on that tithi though it be *viddhā*. If no saṅkalpa is made the person secures very little benefit from the vrata and half the merit is lost.

2. Pratipad-vrata — New Year's Day

It will be shown in the next section how in ancient and medieval times the month in which the year began was different at different times and in different countries. We shall begin with the *pratipad* of the month of Caitra, we shall take the month as ending with Amāvāsyā (*amānta*) and set out from Caitra the important festivals in each month and the tithis therein, and the rest will be entered in the list of vratas appended to this section on vratas.

In those parts of India (such as the Deccan) where the year begins with Caitra, the first tithi is observed with some pomp and religious ceremony. Most of the medieval digests such as Kalpa-taru, Hemādri, Kṛtya-ratnākara and Vratarāja quote from the Brahma Purāna the rites of the beginning of the year on the first tithi of Chaitra bright half. That Purāna states that Brahmā created the world on the first day of the bright half of Chaitra at sunrise, and started the reckoning of time. On that tithi a *mahā-sānti* (propitiatory rite) destroying all untoward occurrences and sins should be offered and first. Brahmā should be worshipped with the well-known upacāras and then the other gods with mantras preceded by

om and the word *namaḥ* (*om namo Brahmane tubhyam*), to all divisions of time from the minutest to yugas and to daughters of Dakṣa and lastly to Viṣṇu, then honor Brāhmaṇas with food and fees, give presents to relatives and servants, homa should be offered to Agni called Yaviṣṭha, special food should be prepared and a great festival should be celebrated.



The Bhavishya Purāna says that since it was declared by Brahmā to be the best among tithis and thus placed in the first place it is called *Pratipad*. On *Caitra pratipad* there is worship of the lord of the year. viz. the lord of the week-day on which pratipad falls; arches and banners should be raised by each householder one should anoint one's body with oil and have a bath, one should eat leaves of the neem-tree (that are bitter) and should hear from the reciter of the calendar the name of the year (*śāka* or *samvat*) its lord and the deities that would be the

ministers for the year, the governing deities of all corns and fluids &c.

Even in these days priests go about in the Deccan to the houses of their patrons and read from the pancaṅga (almanac) the details about the lord of the year &c set out above, people raise a pole with silk cloth at top covered with a silver or brass pot. offer worship to the pole with sandalwood paste flowers &c. and eat neem leaves. This latter is done even in Saurāṣṭra, though the people employ samvat reckoning.

The rule is that the pratipad to be celebrated is that which exists at the time of Sunrise. If pratipad exists at sunrise on two days, then the earlier of the two is to be chosen or if there be no pratipad at sunrise on any day then the one which is *purva-viddhi* should be chosen. For example, if there is Amāvāsyā for four ghaṭikas after sunrise then there is pratipad for 56 ghaṭikas and one ghaṭika more on the next day then the pratipad though affected Amāvāsyā will have to be chosen for the beginning of the year and not the pratipad intermixed with second tithi the next day. If Caitra be an intercalary month then in the opinion of many writers is that the pratipad of the intercalary month should be held to be the beginning of the year. The Samaya-mayūkha holds that when Caitra is an intercalary month the year and spring commence with it, but the ceremonial bath with or and listening to the recital of the year should be done in the pure month. The Dharma-sindhu makes a difference by saying that the ceremonial bath with oil should be taken on the occasion of the commencement of the new year and repeating the name of the new year should be done on the first day of the intercalary month but the raising of the pole, eating of neem leaves. listening to the recital of the almanac should be done in the pure month. In popular belief Caitra-Suddha-pratipad is one of the most important Muhūrtas (auspicious days) of the year. The Sāmrajya-lakṣmī-pithikā gives a very elaborate description of

the great festival on Chaitra-śuddha first performed by a long or a chieftain or a zamindār owning several villages.

3. Rāma-navami

The next important tithi in Caitra is the 9th in the bright half on which is observed the Rāma-navami-vrata and the celebration of the birth of Rāma the 7th avatara of Viṣṇu. The principal works on which reliance is placed in Hemādri, Tithi-tattva, Nirṇayasindhu and other digests are the Agastya-samhitā and Rāmārcana-candrika of Anandāvanayati pupil of Mukundavanayati. It is somewhat remarkable that the Kṛtyakalpataru on vrata does not deal with this festival.

The Rāma cult appears to have become popular later than the Kṛṣṇa cult. Though the Amarakośa gives Viṣṇu, Nārāyaṇa, Jiṣṇu, Vāsudeva, Devaki-Nandana and Damodara as synonyms it does not mention Rāma (Dāśarathi) but mentions Rāma only as a synonym of Haladhara. Here only a brief treatment of Rāma-navami can be attempted. The Rāmārcana-candrika and Vratārka expressly provide that all persons including even caṇḍālas can observe Rāma-navami vrata (they have *adhikāra*).

It is stated in the Agastya samhita that Rāma was born at noon on the 9th of the bright half of Caitra. When Punarvasu asterism was occupied by the Moon and both the Moon and Jupiter were in conjunction and

sukra	surya		Candra Guru
			lagna
kuja		sani	budha

when five planets were in their *uccha* (exaltation), when the zodiacal sign rising on the eastern horizon was Karkataka (Cancer), and when the Sun was in the sign of Meṣa (Aries)

The Kālanirṇaya of Madhava lays down the following. When navami is spread over two days, then, if there is navami at noon only on the earlier of the two days, the vrata should be performed on that day. If there is navami at noon on both days, or if there is no navami at noon on any day, then the vrata should be performed on navami mixed with daśami (and not on navami mixed with aṣṭami). If the 9th tithi is conjoined to Punarvasu asterism that day, that tithi is most holy. Even when there is conjunction of aṣṭami, navami and Punarvasu, still the vrata should be on the next day (i.e. on navami with daśami) There are further minute rules and differences on this which are passed over here.

It is stated that the Rāma-navami-vrata is *nitya* (obligatory) for all, while others say that it is obligatory only for devotees of Rāma and *kāmya* (optional) for those that desire special rewards (such as removal of sin, mukti or release from Samsāra). The Agastya-samhita remarks:—

“This (vrata) is a course prescribed for all and it is the sole means of worldly happiness and mukti. Even a person who is impure or very sinful, having performed the best of vratas, is honored by all and he becomes as if he were Rāma

himself. That wretched man who eats food on Rāmanavami suffers torments in the terrible hells called Kumbhipāka. If one fasts on a single Rāmanavami all ones' goals are fulfilled and he is released from all sins'.

The Agastya-samhita further prescribes:—

“on that day (on which Rāma was born) vrata in the form of a fast should always be performed and on that day the devotee intent on Rāma worship should keep awake at night, sitting on the ground”.

The use of the word '*sadā*' (always) shows that the vrata is obligatory. Others say that the texts promise such rewards as removal of sin and therefore it is *kāmya*. The conclusion of many works (like the Nirṇaya-sindhu and the Tithi-tattva) is that this vrata is both *kāmya* and *nitya* according to the Mimāṃsa maxim of '*samyoga-prthaktva*' (Jai IV 3. 5-7). In the section on 'Agnihotra' the Veda says 'he makes an offering of curds in the fire' there is another sentence in the same, viz. 'one who desires bodily vigor should make an offering of curds in the fire', The meaning is that curds being separately mentioned in two different sentences which are both independent homa with ladle is both *nitya* and *kāmya*.

The procedure of Rāma-navami vrata as set out in the various digests may be briefly described as follows:—

“The devotee should take a bath on the 8th tithi in the bright half of Caitra, perform his *sandhya* prayer and should invite a Brāhmaṇa learned in the Veda and Shastras and devoted to Rāma-worship and knowing the procedure of Rāma mantras, should honour him and make a request— 'I shall make a gift of the image of Rāma.' Then he should give all to the brāhmaṇa for anointing his body, make him bathe, make him wear white garments and flowers should offer him a dinner containing *sāttvika* food and should himself partake of the same food and constantly think of Rāma on that day he and the ācārya honored by him should go without food at night, should listen to the stories of Rāma the whole day and should himself sleep and make the ācārya sleep on the ground (not on a cot). The next morning he should get up. Bathe perform his sandhya and should construct a brilliant maṇḍapa with four doors and decked with arches, banners and flowers. The eastern door should be decked with conch wheel and (an image of) Garuḍa, bow and arrows the western one with mace, sword and armlets and the north with lotuses, svastika signs and blue stones and prepare a raised altar four cubits (in the maṇḍapa) and should provide holy songs, music and dance therein. He should have benedictions from Brāhmaṇas. Then he should make a saṅkalpa — “On the Rāma-navami I shall observe a fast for the whole day and being intent on worshipping Rāma shall make a golden image of Rāma and shall donate it for pleasing Rāma” and then say “may Rāma remove my numerous heavy sins”. The image of Rāma should be placed on a pedestal, have two hands and Janaki should be seated on the left thigh of

(Rāma) image, which should be bathed with pañcāmṛta, then mūla mantra should be recited and the usual saṅkalpa should be made. The festival or pūjā is performed in the noon. Then at night he should keep awake and listen to the divine stories about Rāma and be surrounded by devotees of Rāma, should sing hymns about Rāma. Then the next morning he should bathe, perform sandhya should worship the image of Rāma with sixteen upacāras employing the 16 verses of Rig. X. 90 and with Pauranika verses, also perform the worship of the several limbs of the image (*Sri-Rāma bhadrāya namah pādau pūjāyami* and so on), offer homa on the altar or in a kuṇḍa with the mulamantra and then in the ordinary me offer 108 oblations of clarified butter or payasa. (rice cooked in milk with sugar), then he should honor the ācārya with gifts of ear-rings, finger rings, flowers, clothes &c. and should recite the following mantra:—

‘O Rāma I shall today donate this golden image of yours decked with ornaments and clothes for securing your favor may Rāma favor me’.

He should give dakṣina (fee) to the acharya and to other Brāhmaṇas gold, cow a pair of clothes, corn, according to his ability and then have dinner along with the Brāhmaṇas. By doing so he becomes free from even mortal sins like Brāhmaṇa-murder. There is no need to say more. The man who performs this vrata has murti, in his hand (as it were) and he acquires the same merit that one secures by the gift called Tulapurusa in Kurukṣetra on a solar eclipse.”

Hemādri is comparatively brief but the Tithi-tattva, Nirṇaya-sindhu, Vratārka and further details from Agastya-saṁhita they say that images of Bharata and Satrugna (by the side of Rāma image) and of Lakṣmana with a bow in his hand and of Daśarathē (to the right) and of Kausalya should also be made and worshipped with appropriate Pauranika mantras (the one for Kausalya is quoted in the note). The Rāmārcana-candrika and further details about the worship of ten and five avataras to which even the Nirṇaya-sindhu refers by name alone.



Rāma-navami is not to be celebrated in the intercalary Caitra month (*malamāsa*). The same rule applies to Janmāstami and other vratas.

In modern times not many people observe a fast on Rāmanavami and hardly one performs homa or donates images, but the birth of Rāma is celebrated in Rāma temples by many at noon with great ceremony.

A Haridāsa treats a gathering of people assembled in the temple to a kirtan with music and bhajan on the birth of Rāma. In the Deccan, at the end there is

distribution of sweets or '*Sunthavadā*' (dried ginger with sugar or Jaggery). In some places such as Nasik, Tirupati, Ayodhya and Rameśvara this festival is performed with great pomp and thousands of people attend at these holy places. There is no holy name other than that of Rāma be constantly on Hindu lips even in these days

4. Akṣayya-tritiya

The most important tithi in Vaiśākha is the third of the bright half. It is called Akṣayya-tritiya. The earliest reference to it is probably in the Viṣṇu-dharma-sūtra where it is said that one should fast on this tithi, worship Vāsudeva with whole grains of rice, should offer them into fire and donate them thereby one becomes purified from all sins, whatever a man donates on that day becomes inexhaustible. The Matsya Purāna (chap 65, verses 1-7) and Naradiya treat of this. The former says that whatever is donated or sacrificed or muttered on this tithi becomes inexhaustible (in reward) that a fast thereon gives inexhaustible results that if this tritīya has Kṛtika asterism then it is specially commended. The Bhaviṣyottara-Purāna (chap 30 1-19) deals at some length with it. It says that this tithi is one of the *Yugādi tithis* because the Kṛta age began on it whatever is done on it, such as bath, gifts, muttering of sacred texts (*japa*), offerings into fire, Veda study, satiating deceased (with water) — all that becomes inexhaustible. It provides that gifts of jars of water and of umbrellas and of footwear should be made (to Brāhmaṇas) on this day and that what is sacrificed or donated on this day never comes to an end and therefore this tithi is called *akṣaya* (inexhaustible) by the sages.

The third is to be taken for these religious rites when it exists in the forenoon, but if it exists in the forenoon on two days the one that exists on the later day should be chosen for vrata.²¹ It is provided in the Purānas that tarpana performed on the tithis called *Yugādi* gives inexhaustible gratification to the pitrs. But no piṇḍas (rice-balls) are to be offered in Yugādi-Śrāddha. Akṣayya-tritiya is one of the days popularly believed to be most auspicious in the year (it is itself so).

5. Paraśu Rāma Jayantī

On the third of Vaiśākha bright half is celebrated Paraśu Rāma Jayantī. It is to be celebrated in the first *prahara* (watch) of the night (*sūryāstottaram trimuhūrtah pradosah* Dharmasindhu) it is stated in the Skanda and Bhavishya Purānas that Viṣṇu was born from Reṇuka on the third of the bright half of Vaiśākha when the nakṣatra was Punarvasu and in the first watch of the night and when six planets were *uccha* (in exaltation) and Rahu was in the zodiacal Sign Mithuna (Gemini).

²¹ Vide Hemādri on Kāla and on vrata, Vratarāja. pp 93-96, Sm K. p. 109 for further details.

The image of Paraśu Rāma is to be worshipped and arghya is to be offered to it with the mantra quoted below if the 3rd tithi is *suddhā* (i.e.. not mixed with another tithi) the vrata (i.e.. fast) is to be performed that day, but if on two days there is third tithi in the evening first watch even partially, then the later one is to be the day of the fast, otherwise (if the third is *viddhā*, but does not extend up to the first watch of the night) the fast should be observed on the first of the two days.

There are some temples erected in honor of Parasu-Rāma particularly in the Konkana such as the one near Chiplun in which Parasu Rāma Jayantī is celebrated with great ceremony.²² But Parasu Rāma-Jayantī is not observed in several parts of India (such as Saurāṣṭra), though observed in South India.

6. Daśaharā

In the month of Jyeṣṭha there is a vrata called Daśaharā on the 10th tithi of the bright half. The Brahma Purāna states it is called Daśaharā, because it destroys ten Sins. Ten sins (divided into three classes of the body of speech and of the mind) are enumerated in Manu XII 5-7²³. Some other digests put forward another basis, viz Jyeṣṭha 10th on Tuesday (acc to Varāha) or Wednesday (acc to Skanda), on Hasta nakṣatra, Vyatipāta, Gara (*karana*), Anandā-yoga, the moon and sun being in Virgo and Taurus respectively — when all these concur or when most of them concur, a person should bathe in the Ganges and then becomes free from all sins.

Wednesday and Hasta constitute Anandā yoga — it was supposed that the Ganges came to the earth on this tithi on Tuesday and on Hasta asterism and therefore originally it appears to have been a vrata of a bath in the Ganges at Daśaśvamedha of worship and gifts. Then it was extended to a bath in any big river and offering of arghya, sesame and water.

At present in towns and villages on the big rivers such as Kṛṣṇa Godavari, Narmada and the Ganges, a festival of the Ganges is celebrated at such places as Banaras, Prayaga, Haridvara, Nasik the *utsava* is celebrated on a large scale if there be an intercalary Jyeṣṭha, this vrata was to be performed in that month.

²² Vide N S p. 95. Smk p 112, Pc 89 for further details H V I p 117 gives directions as to the image or painting of Parasu-Rāma.

²³ 5. Coveting the property of others, thinking in one's heart of what is undesirable, and adherence to false (doctrines), are the three kinds of (sinful) mental action. 6. Abusing (others, speaking) untruth, detracting from the merits of all men, and talking idly, shall be the four kinds of (evil) verbal action. 7. Taking what has not been given, injuring (creatures) without the sanction of the law, and holding criminal intercourse with another man's wife, are declared to be the three kinds of (wicked) bodily action.

7. Vāṭa-sāvitṛī-vrata

On the Full moon day of Jyeṣṭha women whose husbands are living perform even now in many parts of India the Sāvitṛī vrata or Vāṭa-sāvitṛī-vrata. The story of Sāvitṛī whose memory has been cherished for ages by all Indian women as an ideal of a *pativrata* — wifely devotion to the husband unto death (and even thereafter) is very popular and is described at great length in the Mahābharata (Vanaparva chap. 293-299) and in the Purānas (such as in Matsya, chap 208-214; Skanda Purāna, Prabhisakhaṇḍa chap 166, Viṣṇudharmottara chap 36-41). It is narrated that she married Satyavan whose death at the end of one year was predicted by the sage Nārada and that three days before the time indicated by Nārada she undertook a fast, accompanied her husband into the forest where he had gone to collect firewood, flowers and fruits as his blind father had lost his kingdom and that she had an argument with Yama the God of Death, who became so pleased with her that he gave her several boons and ultimately her husband that had died as predicted was restored to life.

The Vāṭa-sāvitṛī-vrata that is now in vogue must also have been performed long before the 10th century A.D. The Rājamārtāṇḍa says:— “on the 14th of the bright half of Jyeṣṭha women full of faith perform the Vāṭa-sāvitṛī-vrata for being free from widowhood.” This is followed by people in the Deccan. The Nirṇayāmṛta following the Bhaviṣya held that this vrata was to be performed on Amavasya, while the Kṛtya-tattva say that Sāvitṛī-vrata is to be observed on dark 14th after the Full Moon of Jyeṣṭha.

If the Purnimā is spread over two days, then the vrata is to be performed on Caturdasi (14th tithi) mixed up with Purnima. The three days for which the vrata is to last may have to be begun on the 12th or 13th But if caturdasi is of the extent of 18 ghaṭikas and then Purnima supervenes, then caturdasi is to be given up (K N. p 301).

The worship of the Vāṭa tree comes in probably because Sāvitṛī when the moment of death approached took shelter under the shade of the Vāṭa tree and supported himself by a branch of it and spoke in a choked voice to Sāvitṛī that he had pain in the head. The procedure of this vrata as set out in the Vratārka. and other late medieval works is briefly as follows:—

“The woman should make a saṅkalpa in the form — 'I shall perform Sāvitṛī vrata for securing long life and health to my husband and my sons and for securing freedom from widowhood in this and subsequent lives' She should then sprinkle water at the root of the Vāṭa tree and surround it with cotton threads and should perform its worship with the upacāras and then offer worship to Sāvitṛī (with image or mentally) from her feet upwards and pray to her to bestow on her beauty, good name, prosperity, and freedom from widowhood. Then she should worship Yama and Nārada and give presents (*vayana*) to the priest and break her fast next day.”

In Bengal the mode of performing Sāvitrī-vrata is different from the above. In Bengal there is no Vaṭa-sāvitrī-vrata, but there is Savitri-caturdaśī on the 14th of the dark half of Jyeṣṭha to secure blessed wifeness in later lives. It is continued for 14 years. If a woman was unable to fast for three days, she was allowed to have *nakta* on the 13th, to eat on the 14th whatever came to her without her asking for it and fast on the 15th.

CHAPTER 4

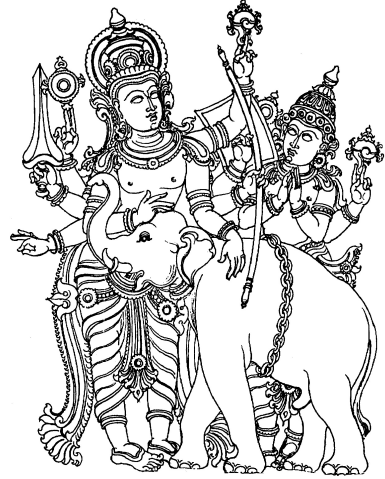
Ekādaśī

The most important tithi in the month of Āṣāḍha is Ekādaśī. A voluminous literature has grown round Ekādaśī in the Purānas and medieval digests. There are separate treatises on Ekādaśī written by medieval writers. They all devote hundreds of pages to discussions on Ekādaśī.

If one were to examine the numerous passages of the Purānas and the like one would notice that some simply prohibit the partaking of food (on Ekādaśī), while others lay down the observance of Ekādaśī vrata. A few specimens of the first kind may be cited. The Naradiya states:—

“All sins whatever and sins equal to Brāhmaṇa-murder take resort to food on the day of Hari one who partakes of food on Ekādaśī incurs those sins the Purānas again and again loudly proclaim ‘one should not eat food, one should not eat food, when the day of Hari comes.’”

In this case the observance of Ekādaśī consists in simply not eating for the whole day anything that is cooked. Those passages which contain the word *vrata* are not to be looked upon as merely prohibiting (the eating of food) but are to be construed as prescribing something positive as in the case of *Prajāpati-vrata* ‘one should not see the rising sun’ which is interpreted by Jaimini IV. 1. 3-6 and VI 2:20. For example it is said by the Matsya and Bhaviṣya — ‘When a man fasts on the 11th and partakes of food on the 12th, whether in the bright or dark half that is a great vrata in honor of Viṣṇu’



Those passages that contain the word '*upavāsa*' and those that prescribe rewards (of observing Ekādaśī) must be construed as laying down the observance of a vrata and not as merely prohibiting anything. Those passages also which condemn eating food on Ekādaśī may be construed as merely intended to commend the vrata and not to contain a prohibition, following the Mimāṃsa maxim condemnation is not indulged in (merely) for the sake of condemnation of that which is condemned, but for the purpose of commending the performance of the opposite of what is censured.

Nahi nindā nindya nindatu pravṛttā api tu vidheya stotum

The passages that lay down a vrata are again two-fold, viz. those that make the observance of Ekādaśī obligatory (*nitya*) and those that lay down the observance for securing some desired object (*kāmya*).

Narada lays down an obligatory rule —

‘those who are devoted to Viṣṇu and who look upon Viṣṇu as their highest goal should always fast on Ekādaśī in each pakṣa (fortnight)’

A passage laying down a *kāmya-vidhi* about Ekādaśī is contained in Katyayana

‘a person who looks on Viṣṇu as highest goal and who desires to cross the ocean of Samsāra or to secure prosperity, offspring, heaven mokṣa or whatever else, should not partake of food on Ekādaśī in both fortnights.’

The result is that Ekādaśī is both *nitya* and *kāmya* and the maxim of *samyoga-prthaktva* cited above under Rāma-navami applies. Ekādaśī of both fortnights is *nitya* only for persons other than householders, the vrata is obligatory for householders (*grhastha*) only on the Ekādaśī of the bright half but not on the Ekādaśī of the dark half, since Devala says 'one should not eat (cooked) food on Ekādaśī. In both *pakṣas* (fortnights) this is the rule of conduct for forest hermits and ascetics, but a householder should always observe only the Ekādaśī of the bright half.' There are conciliating texts on this subject. The Padma says —

‘a householder should observe a fast on only the dark Ekādaśīs between Sayani (Āṣāḍha su. 11) and Bodhini (Kartika Su 11) and on no other ekādaśī of the dark half’.

There is a precept of Nārada —

‘A householder having a son should not observe a fast on a Sankranti day, on the day of Ekādaśī in the dark half and on eclipses of the sun and the moon’.

The best construction of these passages appears to be that a fast only on the Ekādaśī of the bright half is obligatory for a householder, but he may observe (*Kāmya-vrata*) a fast on the Ekādaśīs occurring in the dark half between Sayani and Bodhini but if he has a son he should not observe a fast even on those Ekādaśīs that occur between *Sayani* and *Bodhini* a widow is to be treated on the same level as a Yati, and a woman whose husband is living should fast only on the Ekādaśī of the bright half. It has to be further noted that these restrictions do not apply to professed devotees of Viṣṇu (technically called Vaiṣṇava). To them the verse quoted above applies and they have to observe a fast on all Ekādaśīs. Hemādri held the view that every one has *adhikāra* for fasting on Ekādaśīs in both pakṣas.

Extremely exaggerated praise of the efficacy of fasting on Ekādaśī has been indulged in by many Purānas and digests. In the Nārada Purāna there is a long passage on the greatness (*mahātmya*) of Ekādaśī. A few of the verses may be cited here:—

‘By the fire arising from (the observance of) Ekādaśī, fuel in the form of sins committed in hundreds of past lives is reduced to ashes. Thousands of Aśvamedha sacrifices and hundreds of Vājapeya sacrifices do not reach even up to the 16th part (of the merit) of the fast on Ekādaśī. This Ekādaśī bestows heaven and mokṣa, confers a kingdom and sons (on a man) and a good spouse and the health of the

body. The Ganges, Gaya, Kasi, Puskara, Kurukṣetra, the Narmadi, the Devaki, the Yamuna, the Chandrabhaga are none of them equal to the day of Hari.'

The Padma declares:—

'on hearing the word Ekādaśī, the messengers of Yama become afraid, having fasted on Ekādaśī which is the best among all Vratas, one should keep awake (in the night) for propitiating Viṣṇu and should sumptuously decorate (the temple or maṇḍapa of) Viṣṇu. The one who worships Hari with basil leaves secures by each single leaf the reward of a thousand sacrifices.'

The Varāha-Purāna (chap 30) declares that Brahma gave Ekādaśī to Kubera (the lord of wealth) and that to the person who controls himself, who is pure and eats only what is not cooked by fire, Kubera, being pleased, gives everything. The Padma narrates the story of a woman, who was always quarrelsome and who thought of her lover, was therefore censured by her husband and beaten, and who in anger went without food and died at night and who on account of her fast (not under-taken cheerfully and willingly, but out of anger) became pure. The Garuḍa Purāna declares (if one weighs) on one side (in one pan) the gift of the whole world and on the other side (in another pan) the day of Hari, this Ekādaśī is more holy and superior. The Ekādaśī in Aṣāḍha śukla is called Mahā-Ekādaśī and also Śayani.

But some rules of *adhikāra* meant specially for the observers of Ekādaśī will be set out here. Narada provides:—

'A human being who is more than eight years old and is less than eighty years in age incurs sin if he eats food on Ekādaśī through foolishness.'

Kātyāyana has a similar verse. These two establish that every human being of whatever varṇa or ashram can observe Ekādaśī provided he fulfils the conditions as to age laid down in the verses.

Knowing the weakness of human beings, sages relaxed the rule of an absolute fast on Ekādaśī. The Nārada Purāna says roots, fruits, milk and water may be partaken of (on Ekādaśī) by great sages, but no sages have said that on Ekādaśī cooked food may be taken.

The Vāyu Purāna provided:—

'partaking of haviṣya food at night, food other than boiled rice, fruits, sesame, milk, water, ghee, panca-gavya, air—each succeeding one is here (i.e. in Ekādaśī) more commendable (than each preceding one).'

Baudhāyana declares that those who are unable to observe a complete fast (on Ekādaśī) or who are over 80 years of age should resort to *ekabhakta* and the other (alternatives). The Matsya provides that those who are unable to fast (on Ekādaśī) should prefer to take food by the *nakta* method and if a person is ill, he should make his son and others to undertake the fast (on his behalf). Who can act as *pratinidhi* in the case of a vrata has already been described above.

It is said by Mārkaṇḍeya that one may observe the methods of *eka-bhakta*,

nakta, *ayācita*, complete fast and *dāna* but should not deprive oneself of the benefits of the observance of *dvādasi* (with *Ekādaśi*). Here certain alternatives are allowed in place of an absolute fast and they have to be explained. But before doing so attention has to be drawn to the rule propounded by Manu viz. If a person being master of (i.e. quite able to carry out) the main provisions for a rite, resorts to alternatives provided (by texts) he would not, foolish as he is secure the other worldly rewards (of that rite). Therefore *eka-bhakta*, *nakta* and *ayācita* are to be employed only if one is unable to observe a strict fast.

Eka-bhakta

Eka-bhakta means eating only once a day after the middle of the day. *Madhyāhna* means the 3rd part of the day divided into five parts (i.e.. from the 13th ghaṭi after sunrise up to the 18th of a day of 30 ghatīs) Hemādri holds that *madhyāhna* is the middle part of the day divided into three parts and according to him the proper time for *ekabhakta* is the time immediately after midday. When *ekabhakta* is merely an alternative to strict *upavāsa* on *Ekādaśi*, food must be taken on the *tithi* on which the fast would have been observed if the performer were able to undergo it. The same rule applies to *nakta* as a substitute for *upavāsa*.

Ekabhakta is also a *vrata* independently performed (without reference to *Ekādaśi*). The *Anuśāsanaparva* (chap. 106 verses 17-30) declares the rewards secured by observing *ekabhakta* in each month from *Margasirsa* to *Kārtika* and *Anusasanaparva* (chap 107.13-126) dilates upon the fruits of observing *ekabhakta* on each of the thirty days of a month.

Nakta

Two verses about *nakta* occurring in the *Liṅga*, *Narada* and other *Purānas* are alms collected by begging are superior to fasting, food obtained without requesting anyone for it (i.e. *ayācita*) is superior to alms, *nakta* is superior to *ayācita*, therefore one should subsist by *nakta* method:— eating only *haviṣya*, food, bath, truthfulness, small intake of food, offering oblations; the other is of the nature of a *vrata*. As regards the first all persons including householders having a son have *adhikāra* to observe it even in the dark half but as regards the second (*upavāsa* of the nature of *Vrata*) householders that have progeny should not observe it on the *Ekādaśi*s of the dark half, they should not make a *saṅkalpa* they should simply give up cooked food but should observe the *niyamas* of celibacy and the like.

As to *Ekādaśi*s of the dark half between the *Sayani* and *Bodhini* even householders with sons have the right to perform the *vrata*. Similarly, those who desire to secure absorption into *Viṣṇu*, long life and sons may perform a *kāmya-vrata* on *Ekādaśi*s of both *pakṣas*. *Vaiṣṇava* householders should always fast even on *Ekādaśi*s of the dark half. The *Ekādaśi* fast is obligatory on all

including devotees of Śiva, Viṣṇu and the Sun.

Upavāsa in the nature of Vrata is again of two kinds, *nitya* and *kāmya*. These are briefly the rules laid down in the *Nirṇayasindhu* and *Dharmasindhu*. The main difference between mere *upavāsa* and *upavāsa-vrata* is that in the former there is no *saṅkalpa* that the person is undertaking an *upavāsa-vrata* and he simply abstains from taking food because the Śāstra says that on *Ekādaśī* one should not eat cooked food. While in the latter there is *saṅkalpa* and there are also several other matters to be observed.

It would now be proper to give a comparatively early but brief description of *Ekādaśī vrata*. The *Nārada Purāna* describes the procedure as follows — on the 10th tithi the observer of the vrata should after getting up brush the teeth, take a bath, bathe a Viṣṇu image in *pañcāmṛta* and offer worship (of several *upacāras*) to it. On the 11th after bathing, he should bathe the image with *pañcāmṛta* and worship Viṣṇu with sandalwood paste, flowers etc. and repeat the mantra:—

‘after remaining without food on the *Ekādaśī* I shall, O lotus-eyed one, on the next day partake of cooked food, be you, O Acyuta, my refuge’.

He should take no food, should curb his senses, lie down in front of the Viṣṇu image, keep awake during the night engaged in songs, music and dances relating to Viṣṇu and listen to stories about Viṣṇu contained in the *Purānas*.

On the 12th tithi, he should after a bath for himself, bathe the image with milk and then address the following prayer —

ajñāna timirāndhasya vratenānena keśava |
prasāda sumukho bhūtvā jñāna-drṣṭi prado bhava ||

‘O Kesava! May you by reason of this vrata favor (me) who am blinded by the darkness of ignorance, may you turn your benignant face (towards me) and bestow on me the sight of knowledge’.

Then he should feed *Brāhmaṇas* and give them *dakṣina* (gifts or fees) according to his ability. After that he should perform his daily five sacrifices (*brahma-yajña*, *pitṛ-tarpana*, *vaiśva-deva bali* and *atithi-pūjāna*) and should himself take his meal along with his relatives and should observe silence when eating. While engaged in the *upavāsa-vrata* a person should never look at *caṇḍālas*, persons guilty of grave sins, atheists, those that have violated the rules of proper conduct, those who engage in vituperations or back-biting he should not speak with the husband of a *vrsali*, with one who acts as a priest for those who are unfit for performing sacrifices, with one who worships images in temples for money,²⁴ with one who subsists by practicing the profession of singing or medicine (for money), with one who is a bard or one who is opposed to gods

²⁴ *Manu* III. 152 provides that physicians and priests doing worship in temples for money are unfit to be invited at a *śrāddha*.

and brāhmanas or those who are fond of eating at others' houses and adulterers. One who is engaged in upavāsa vrata should be pure (in body and mind), should control himself and should be intent on doing good to all.

It will be noticed that the main matters in the vrata are *upavāsa*, worship of Viṣṇu image, *Jāgara* at night with songs and music, *pāranā* on 12th and certain restrictions about gazing at some persons or speaking to them and restraint of the senses.

Accretions gathered around this simple procedure it was laid down early enough that one engaged in upavāsa vrata should miss four meals in three days, i.e. he should eat only once on the 10th in the noon, fast both times on 11th and on the 12th he should miss one meal. The general rule is that the saṅkalpa for vratas is to be made in the morning, but as regards Ekādaśi-vrata exceptions have been made in the digests. For example, it is said that the saṅkalpa about niyamas is to be made on the night of the 10th tithi if Ekādaśi is mixed up with 10th, then saṅkalpa about fast is to be made at night, if daśami extends beyond midnight and the Ekādaśi becomes mixed with it, saṅkalpa is to be made the next day after noon. Hemādri and Kāla-nirṇaya (p 268) provide that an image of Viṣṇu should be worshipped in a maṇḍapa decorated charmingly with flowers of various kinds it is provided in the Skanda that when a person breaks his fast on the 12th he should partake of the naivedya mixed with Tulasi (basil) leaves, since that destroys (the sins of) thousands of murders.

Numerous medieval digests set out the procedure of Ekādaśi-vrata. For the sake of comparison with the Narada Purāna procedure, I shall set out the procedure of Ekādaśi-vrata from the Dharmasindhu — almost the latest authoritative work on Dharma Śāstra.

Now (is set out) the procedure of (Ekādaśi) vrata. On the day previous to the fast, the person, after performing all his daily duties in the morning, should make a saṅkalpa in the form:—

'beginning from the 10th tithi. O god Kesava, lord of gods, I shall perform for three days your vrata make it free from obstacles'.

Then at midday (of 10th) he should eat by the *eka-bhakta* method. The restrictions to be observed about *ekabhakta* are; he should avoid taking food in a vessel of bell metal, avoid flesh, *masura* pulse, sleeping by day, over-eating, drinking too much water, eating food again (after the midday meal), sexual intercourse, telling falsehood, honey, gram, *kodrava*, vegetables, the food belonging to others, gambling, oil, sesame cakes, tāmbūla (betel leaves and nut &c), if he has to cleanse his teeth after *ekabhakta* he should do so with twigs.

At night he should sleep on a bed spread on the ground. In the morning of Ekādaśi he should cleanse his teeth with the leaves of a tree and not with twigs. After performing bath and other daily duties, he should put on his finger a *pavitri* (loop) made of darbha grass, turn his face to the north, take a copper

vessel full of water and make a Saṅkalpa as follows:—

‘after remaining without food on the Ekādaśi I shall, O lotus-eyed one, on the next day partake of cooked food, O Acyuta, be you my refuge’.

Or he may offer a handful of flowers to Hari with this mantra. In the case of one who is unable to observe a total fast, necessary changes may be made in the sentence of saṅkalpa according to one’s ability viz. ‘on Ekādaśi I shall subsist on water or milk or on fruits or I shall take food at the time of nakta’, Saivas should make the saṅkalpa with Rudra Gayatri, Sun-worshippers should make the saṅkalpa with the usual Gayatri (Rig, III. 62 10 ‘*tat savitur*’ &c) or by taking the name of the Sun. This saṅkalpa should be made by smārtas on the night of the Ekādaśi tithi, if there is 10th tithi after sunrise (mixed up with Ekādaśi), if 10th tithi exists beyond midnight on daśami day all (whether smārtas or vaiṣṇavas) should make the saṅkalpa after midday. He should drink the water used for saṅkalpa on making the saṅkalpa he should pronounce over it thrice the mantra of eight syllables (such as ‘*om namo nārāyaṇāya*’). Then after erecting a maṇḍapa decorated with flowers (garlands &c) he should offer worship to Hari (image) according to prescribed rites in that maṇḍapa with flowers, fragrant substances, incense, best naivedya, with various divine hymns of praise, charming songs and music, with straight prostrations on the ground like a staff, with best announcements with the word ‘Jaya’ and at night he should keep awake,

The cult of Ekādaśi went on growing apace, so much so that for the 24 Ekādaśis of the twelve months of the lunar year and for the two Ekādaśis of the intercalary month separate names were invented it is not possible to say with certainty when these names were given, but some of them must be about two thousand years old. There is some divergence about the names, but for want of space no notice is taken of it here. One cause of divergence appears to be that in some Purānas the month is *Purṇimānta*, while in others the month is *amānta* and what is Bhadra-Kṛṣṇa in *Purṇimānta* reckoning is Śrāvana-Kṛṣṇa in *amānta* reckoning.

The Ekādaśi on Jyeṣṭha bright half is called *nirjala* because the vrata consists in not using or drinking water except at the time of bathing or at *ācamana*. In the summer month of Jyeṣṭha it must have been a great trial to go without water for a day and therefore it was specially commended. Viṣṇu was supposed to sleep for four months from Aṣāḍha bright Ekādaśi at night and to rise from his sleep on Kartika bright Ekādaśi by day and hence these two Ekādaśis are respectively called *Sayani* (connected with the śayana i.e. sleeping of Viṣṇu) and *Prabhodhini* or *Prabodhani* (connected with the *prabodha* i.e. awakening of Viṣṇu). What the legend of Viṣṇu's sleeping from Aṣāḍha Śukla eleven for four months was really meant to illustrate or symbolize it is difficult to say. As these four months were the monsoon in many parts of India, all movements from one place to another distant place came almost to a stand-still in ancient times, so

probably mythology became busy and suggested that Viṣṇu himself gave up all activity. It is possible that this legend of four months sleep may have some connection with the state of things when the ancestors of the Vedic Aryans lived in northern latitudes, when for four months the Sun was either not seen or emitted only faint light. This legend from whatever cause it may have arisen is worked up in various ways. It was said that Viṣṇu not only slept but he also turned in his sleep from one side to the other (as human beings do) on Bhādrapada śukla 11th and therefore that Ekādaśī in Bhādrapada was called *Parivartini*. This matter was still further elaborated and it was asserted that all the great gods and goddesses went to sleep like Viṣṇu on different dates. Then, further differences arose, some works saying Viṣṇu went to sleep on the 11th some that Viṣṇu slept on 12th while a third lot said that Viṣṇu slept all the 15th of Āṣāḍha bright half. The Vanaparva (203:12) declared that Viṣṇu sleeps on the hoods of Sesa. Kālidāsa in the Meghadūta refers to both the sleeping of Viṣṇu on his snake couch and his rising from it (*sāpānto me bhujagasayanād utthite sārṅgapānau*).

The question as to the tithi on which the gods (and particularly Viṣṇu) went to sleep very much exercised the minds of the authors of Purānas and of the digests. For example, the Vāmana Purāna contains verses some of which may be summarized here:—

“A person should arrange a couch in the form of the hoods of the snake Sesa for the lord of the world (Viṣṇu) on the 11th tithi of Āṣāḍha and offer worship; he should, being himself pure, seek on the 12th permission from brāhmanas invited, and should bring to sleep the Lord that wears yellow clothes.”

Then the Purāna proceeds to narrate how Kāma (God of Love) sleeps on 13th of Āṣāḍha on a bed of *kadamba* flowers, the *Yakṣas* on 14th Śiva on the 15th (i.e. Pūrṇima) on a bed of tiger-skin, then Brahma, Visvakarma, Pārvati, Gaṇeśa, Yama, Skanda, the Sun, Kātyayani, Lakṣmī, Lord of snakes, Sādhyas respectively go to sleep on the tithis of the dark half from 1st to 11th. The K V (p 225) and Hemādri (on Kāla pp 888-889) quote certain verses according to which Kubera, Lakṣmī, Bhavānī, Gaṇeśa, Soma, Guha, Bhāskara, Durgā, the Mātr̥s, Vasuki, sages, Viṣṇu, Kāma, Śiva are the lords of tithis from 1st to 14th for *pavitraropana* (i.e. giving the sacred *upavīta* to the gods) and for Śayana.

One important rule has to be remembered, viz. whatever *nakṣatra* or whatever *tithi* has a certain deity as its lord, the sleeping, turning from one side to another and the rest (i.e. getting up &c) take place on that tithi or nakṣatra. Some celebrate the *śayana* of a god relying on the tithi, others rely on the nakṣatra. But the trouble is that one tithi has several lords, according to various authorities for example, *pratipad* has three lords, Agni, Brahmā and Kubera. In some works Āṣāḍha Full moon is advocated for the śayana of Viṣṇu.

On the Śayana day, the devotee prepares a couch in the evening with a piece of cloth or with flowers, worships Viṣṇu (Image) at night, repeats the mantra 'om

namo nārāyaṇāya’ and then puts Viṣṇu to sleep and repeats two verses, one of which is :—

*supte tvayī jagannāthe jagat-supta bhaved idam |
prabuddhe tvayi budhyeta jagat sarvam carācaram ||*

On the day of *prabodha* the image of Viṣṇu is given an elaborate bath and a full worship is done and several mantras from Varāha-purāna are recited and a Vedic verse (*idam Viṣṇur* Rig 1;22.17) also is recited.

Persons having *adhikāra* for ekadasi-vrata may be divided into two classes, viz. Vaiṣṇavas and Smārtas. A Vaiṣṇava is really one who has received *dikṣa* (initiation) according to the Vaiṣṇava *Āgamas* of the Vaikhānasa, Pañcarātra and other schools. The Skanda defines a Vaiṣṇava as one who does not forsake (fast on) ekādasi whether he be reduced to the direct misery or whether great bliss might have come to him, who has been given the dikṣa of a Vaiṣṇava who behaves equally towards all living beings, who does not swerve from the duties of his class (varna), who is equal to his own friends of his class (varna), who is equal to his own friends or his enemies, who, being high (in principles), does not deprive anyone (of his possessions) or does not injure anyone, and whose mind is pure.

Though the Purānas give these definitions, some of which are very general and may apply even to persons not popularly called Vaiṣṇavas still in all parts of India and by all *śiṣṭas* it is admitted that those are Vaiṣṇavas who are traditionally known by that appellation. The question on what tithi upavāsa should be practiced when Ekādaśī is mixed up with the 10th tithi and 12th has to be often answered in different ways according as the person who is to observe the fast is a Vaiṣṇava or a Smārta.

The Narada and other Purānas condemn fast on Ekādaśī mixed with daśami. Narada Purāna (purvardha, chap 29. 39-40) says:—

‘the 6th tithi mixed with the 5th, the seventh mixed with the 9th and Ekādaśī mixed with daśami — a fast should never be observed on these all should accept (for fast) Ekādaśī free from daśami; daśami joined to Ekādaśī destroys Spiritual merit acquired in three past lives.’

This aversion to daśami was probably due to the fact that daśami finds no place in the famous *yugma-vākya* and the pair that is commended is that of Ekādaśī and dvādaśī (and not of Ekādaśī and daśami). One well-known verse is Gandhari observed a fast on Ekādaśī mixed with daśami her one hundred sons (the Kauravas) perished (in the Bharata war) therefore one should give up that kind of Ekādaśī for a fast 291 The Narada Purāna (purvardha, chap. 29) devotes 15 verses to the discussion of Ekādaśī and Dvādaśī.

In the case of Vaiṣṇavas, if daśami extends on a civil day beyond 56 ghaṭikas from sunrise, then Ekādaśī follows and continues for the whole of the next civil day, there is then what is called *Arunodaya-vedha* and Vaiṣṇavas cannot observe

a fast on such an ekādaśī which is preceded by *Arunodayavedha*. The same result follows if daśami extends up to 3, 2 or one ghatika before sunrise or daśami persists till the exact time when the Sun rises and then Ekādaśī starts (when there is what is called *sūryodaya-vedha*). A Vaiṣṇava in deciding on what tithi to fast is attested by both *arunodaya-vedha* and *suryodaya-vedha* i.e. even if Ekādaśī exists for full 60 ghatikas after sunrise on a civil day when daśami precedes it by four ghatikas, or by three, two or one ghati or when daśami exists for one moment at sunrise and then Ekādaśī follows at once, still the Vaiṣṇava cannot observe a fast on the Ekādaśī of 60 ghatikas but only on the next is the 12th.

If Dvādaśī touches three civil days, then the fast for Vaiṣṇavas is on the day which is wholly covered by dvādaśī and the *pāranā* is on the next day when dvādaśī ends. In any cases other than those specified above Ekādaśī is the fast day and Dvādaśī is the *pāranā* day.

Nārada Purāna (purvārdha, chap 29 verse 45) prescribes that if there are two Ekādaśīs, whether in the bright half or dark half, a house-holder should fast on the earlier of the two and ascetics (yatis) on the later. Sannyasins and widows are governed by the rules for Vaiṣṇava. Smārtas (all those who are not Vaiṣṇavas) are not affected by the doctrine of *arunodaya-vedha* but only by *suryodaya-vedha* i.e. if there is daśami before sunrise and an Ekādaśī follows from sunrise, smārtas have to observe a fast on the Ekādaśī.

There are many texts that are apparently in conflict, but the Kālanirṇaya (pp 251-256) and Nirṇayasindhu introduce order by showing that some texts refer to Vaiṣṇavas alone, some to Smārtas alone and some to both. The Ekādaśī-tattva brings together many of the conclusions about the fast tithi and the *pāranā* tithi.

There are cases where the texts sometimes allow fast on Ekādaśī even though mixed with daśami. This occurs when dvādaśī does not exist even for a short time on the 13th tithi. But this is allowable only to Smārtas and not to Vaiṣṇavas.

Restrictions on Ekādaśī

Certain restrictions as to food and physical and mental activities had to be observed from the time saṅkalpa was made to the final ceremonies (*pāranā*) in Ekādaśī vrata. It may be noted that even when a person is in mourning he has to observe Ekādaśī Vrata. Certain observances were laid down as common to all vratas (including Ekādaśī) viz. forbearance, truthfulness compassion, charity, purity, restraint of senses, worship of god, homa, contentment and not misappropriating another's wealth. There were separate rules to be observed on daśami, Ekādaśī and Dvādaśī (10th tithi to 12th). They are somewhat overlapping.

The usages proscribed for daśami are:— vegetables, flesh, masura pulse, eating again (after *ekabhakta*), sexual intercourse, dice-play, drinking much water — a

devotee of Viṣṇu should avoid these. The Matsya Purāna provides:—

“(vessels of) bell-metal, flesh, wine, honey, oil, telling an untruth, physical exercise, journey, sleeping by day, earning (wealth), oil-cakes, masura pulse — one should omit these twelve (on daśami).”

The restrictions on the day of fast are many, but a few are stated here. Harita lays down one should on a day of fasting avoid speaking with persons guilty of grave sins, heretical persons, atheists and the like and also falsehood, gambling and the like. The Kurma Purāna provides on the day of vrata one should not touch nor speak nor gaze at persons that are *antyajas* (untouchables) and have to live outside the village, a woman recently delivered, one guilty of grave sins and a woman in her monthly illness. Devala provides that a fast perishes (i.e. all rewards of observing it are lost) by sleep in the day, by gambling and by sexual intercourse but in case of great pain (or danger) a fast is not affected by drinking water (frequently).

Hemādri (on vrata vol. I p. 331) quoting Matsya forbids a bath with oil on Ekādaśī. A fast is vitiated by drinking water often, by eating tāmbula, by sleep in day time and by sexual intercourse. When Vyāsa says that flowers, ornaments, (rich) clothes, fragrant substances, incense, sandalwood paste, brushing the teeth and collyrium (in the eyes) would not vitiate a fast, he is referring to the fast observed by women whose husbands are alive.

On the 12th the person has to offer worship to Viṣṇu and has to avoid sleeping by day the food belonging to another person, eating again after the midday meal (on 12th), sexual intercourse, honey, bell metal vessel, meat, oil. The passage in the note below is practically the same as the one cited from Brahmāṇḍa-Purāna by Hemādri (on Kāla p 208) as containing the restrictions about dvādaśī.

The result of the insistence by Vaiṣṇavism on observing a fast on Ekādaśī mixed with dvādaśī was often this that in order to be able to observe *pāranā* on divas before it ended, they had to get up very early before dawn, take their bath and compress all their morning and midday duties into a short period before sunrise. In modern times many orthodox Vaishnavism do this and rely on the authority of the Nārada and Skanda Purānas quoted below. A smārta text goes so far as to prescribe ‘on seeing that dvadasi exists only for half a *kalā* after *niśītha*, a (Vaiṣṇava) person should perform all acts proper to be performed up till midday following, because Sankara has so has ordered.

Kalā as a measure of time has been variously defined Matsya (14.24) and Vāyu (100 217-218) say that 50 kālās are equal to a muhūrta (i.e two ghaṭikas) on the other hand, the Amarakosa holds that 360 kalās constitute a Muhūrta and the Kāla-nirṇaya accepts this last. As the astronomers themselves were at variance as to the length of a tithi in question, a plain straight forward rule was proposed that the fast in case of doubt should be observed on Dvādaśī and the *pāranā* should be observed on the 13th.

The rank and file of Vaiṣṇavas are very exclusive and bigoted and treat with some contempt everything connected with Śiva and some of them eat sumptuous food on Śiva-rātri instead of observing a fast! Many of the smārtas generally observe a fast both on the Ekādaśī and the Śiva-rātri (particularly the Mahā-śivarātri i.e. on Magha dark 14th). There have been great wrangles and hatreds among Vaiṣṇavas and Saives. The Brahma Purāna expressly states that in the holy Purusottama kṣetra a temple of Śiva was erected in order to put a stop to the wranglings between Saivas and Bhagavatas (devotees of Viṣṇu). The higher Hindu thought including even the Purānas excursions in philosophy always held that there is only one God, that the one Brahman that is all Intelligence that is incapable of being thoroughly comprehended, that is without parts and without body, is imagined to have different visible forms for securing the purposes of devotees and that deities deemed to have visible forms are imagined as male or female or as portions (of the one brahma). The Mahābharata and some of the Purānas emphasize that God is one and that there is no difference between Śiva and Viṣṇu.

Some Purānas put forward the notion that health is secured from (the worship of God as) the Sun, wealth from Agni, (true) knowledge from Sankara, and Mokṣha from Viṣṇu.

Some of the Purānas (such as Brahmavaivarta) specially mention eight kinds of Dvādaśīs viz. Unmīlanī, Vanjuli, Trisprśā, Pakṣa-varadhini, Jayā, Vijayā, Jayantī and Pāpanāśini. Jayā, Vijayā, Jayantī and Pāpanāśini are Dvādaśīs respectively having Punarvasu, Śrāvana, Rohini, Pusya, nakṣatras. Trisprśā is Dvādaśī which spreads over three days i.e. it exists before sunrise on a certain day, then on the whole of the next day from sunrise and for some time (however short) after the latter. On these fast should be observed by those desirous of destruction of sins and attainment of mokṣa.

A summary of the different items that constitute Ekādaśī-vrata.

On the 10th the performer has a meal at midday (*ekabhakta*), then he cleans his teeth (not with a twig) but with leaves or by rinsing the mouth twelve times with water. Then on the night of 10th he gives up his evening meal and begins to observe the restrictions indicated above. Then on the 11th after getting up he cleanses the body as well as the mind and makes a saṅkalpa in the morning as described above. The saṅkalpa has to be made at night or in the noon if ekādaśī is *viddhā*. Then he recites thrice the mantra of eight syllables (*om namo nārāyaṇāya*) on the water in the copper vessel in his hands and drinks water there from. On the 11th he prepares a maṇḍapa of flowers, worships the Viṣṇu image therein and offers the several upacāras. He fasts that day. He recites hymns of praise to Viṣṇu and falls prostrate on the ground in salutation. He then keeps awake at night on the 12th he takes a bath in the morning, offers worship to Hari and dedicates his fast to the God, recites the mantra (*Ajñāna*

timirāndhasya' &c cited above) and performs the *pārana*. This is the general outline of *kāmya Ekādaśī vrata*. In the case of the obligatory fast, the performer should abstain from food the whole day and also keep the several restrictions to be observed on *Ekādaśī* (as described above such as not drinking water more than once, not sleeping by day &c) The rules for the followers of Chaitanya about *Ekādaśī* as summarised from the *Hari-Bhakti-vilasa* by Prof S. K De in 'Vaiṣṇava faith and Movement' do not differ much from those stated above.

Udyāpana

A Vrata comes to an end by a rite called *udyāpana* (carrying out) or *pārana* or *pāranā*. The word *pārana* or *pāranā* derived by some from the root '*pāra*' meaning 'to finish an action or rite',

According to the *Kurma-Purāna*, one should fast on the *Ekādaśī* and *pārana* is to be on the 12th but *pārana* should not be done on 13th tithi, since that would destroy (the merit) of twelve *dvādaśis*. In spite of this, *pārana* on the 13th tithi had to be allowed under certain circumstances e.g. if *Ekādaśī* is mixed with *daśami* on a prior day and with *dvādaśī* on the next day, then the fast is to be on *dvādaśī* but if no *dvādaśī* at all exists on the day after the fast then *pāranā* may be on the 13th tithi. The *Viṣṇudharmottara* prescribes that a vrata ends with *pāranā* and at the end of a vrata, *Brāhmaṇas* are to be fed. The general rule is that in all vratas, the *pāranā* is in the morning. One should perform the *udyāpana* as laid down in the texts providing for the vrata concerned a vrata becomes fruitless if the *udyāpana* be not performed.

If no form of *udyāpana* is prescribed by the texts, the performer should perform a rite in consonance with the vrata. He should make gifts in proportion to his wealth when no form of *udyāpana* is mentioned in the texts on a vrata. For making the vrata complete he should donate cows and gold. If none of these can be given and nothing can be done as laid down in the texts, the words of a *Brāhmaṇa* alone are sufficient to complete a vrata but if a man receives the blessed words of *Brāhmaṇas* without giving a *dakṣina* (though able), he goes to hell.

A difficulty may arise owing to the rule that no fresh vrata is to be undertaken till one (prior) vrata is finished and that vrata includes its *pāranā*. Suppose, one has undertaken years ago to observe two vratas, then he may have to observe a fast on *Ekādaśī* and also on *Dvādaśī* owing to another vrata already undertaken *Pāranā* involves *bhojana* (taking food). But this is impossible if one has to undergo two fasts successively. The remedy is that at the end of the first vrata the performer (who has to undergo two fasts) should sip water. The Veda says that when a man partakes of water it is neither eating nor non-eating.

CHAPTER 5

CĀTURMĀSYA

On Āṣāḍha-Śukla ekādaśī or dvādaśī or paurṇimā or on the day when the Sun enters the Zodiacal sign Cancer. Cātur-māsyā-vrata is to be observed. Whenever it may be begun it is to be finished on Karttika-Śukla 12th.

The performer should observe a fast that day, worship Viṣṇu (image) and pray as follows: (Garuḍa Purāṇa 1 131:2-3)

“O God! I have under taken this vrata in your presence may it succeed without obstacles if you become favorable to me, after I undertake this vrata if I die when it is half-finished, may it become completely fulfilled through your favor”!

The vrata may be begun even when Jupiter or Venus has become invisible and the like. The performer has to give up some edible during the four months, viz. vegetables in Srāvana, curds in Bhādrapada, milk in Āśvina and pulses in Kartika. According to some authorities, he has to give up some or all vegetables for all the four months. The performer is asked to give up many other things also such as sleeping on a bed, meat, honey &c. When the vrata is finished, he invites Brāhmaṇas, announces to them what restrictions he had undertaken, feeds them, gives them dakṣiṇa, and recites the prayer:—

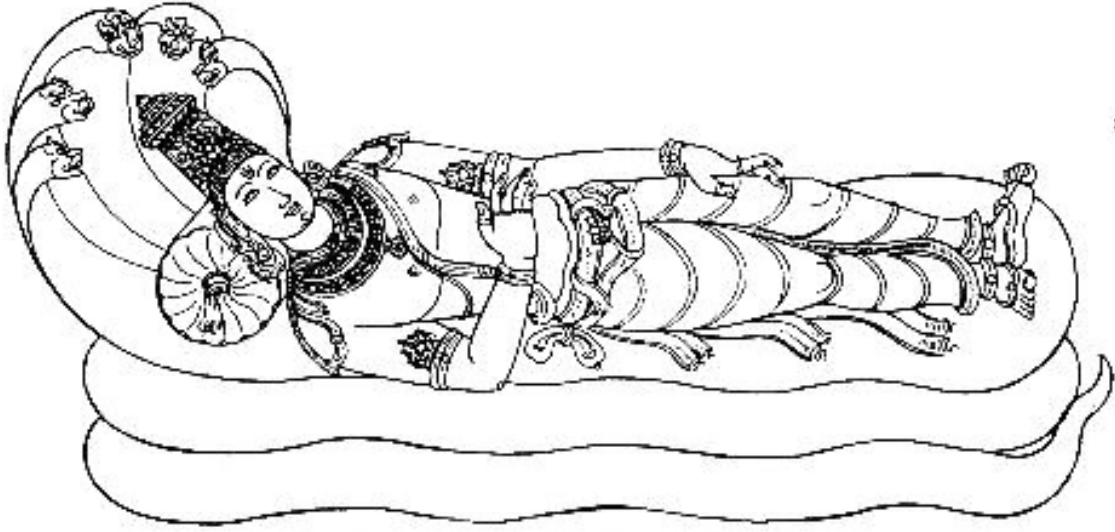
“O Lord this Vrata was undertaken by me in order to please you, O Janardana! may it become complete through your favor, whatever defect there may be!”

This vrata is even now observed, particularly by women. A few passages are set out as a sample of the results of this vrata:—

“A man secures a sweet voice by giving up jaggery, has charming limbs by giving up oil, by giving up ghee he secures beauty, by giving up fruits he becomes intelligent and has many sons, by giving up vegetables and leaves he secures well-cooked dishes, by giving up curds and milk he goes to the world of cows.”

In the Vedic period there were sacrifices called Cātur-māsyas (seasonal sacrifices) that were performed on the Full Moon days of Phalguna (or Chaitra), of Āṣāḍha and Kārtika and were respectively called *Vaiśvadeva*, *Varunapraghāsa* and *Śākamedha*. It was expressly stated by Āpastamba Sruta 8:4.13 that *Vaiśvadeva* (*parvan* of Cātur-māsyā) was to be offered in spring and *Varunapraghāsa* in the rainy season. It may be noted that the sacrificer in these seasonal sacrifices had to keep certain observances such as sleeping on the ground, avoiding meat, honey, salt, sexual intercourse and bodily decorations which closely resemble the restrictions laid on the person observing Ekādasi-vrata. The Yajñavalkya-smṛti makes it obligatory on a person of means to offer a Soma sacrifice every year, a *paśubandha* in each *ayana*, the *Agrayanesti* (performed when new crops are ready) and the Cātur-māsyas. The Cātur-māsyas meant here are the Vedic ones mentioned above and not the Paurānika vratas of Cātur-māsyā.

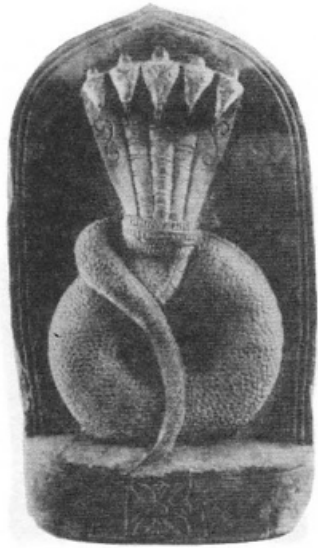
The Yajñavalkya-smṛti employs the word *vrata* in the sense of *prāyaścitta* in III: 251, 252, 254, 266, 269, 282, 298, 300, in the sense of '*brahmācārya*' in III. 15, and in the sense of the food to be subsisted upon in III. 289, but hardly ever in the sense of a rite to be observed on a tithi or week day or nakṣatra as in the Purānas. This at least indicates that the *vratas* mentioned in the Purānas had not attained prominence in the time of the Yajñavalkya-smṛti which, in spite of its containing over 1000 verses, hardly ever refers to any *vrata* in the sense of the Purānas.



CHAPTER 6

1. Nāga-pañcamī

In the month of Śrāvana there are several important vratas, one of which is Nāga-pañcamī on the 5th of the bright half of Śrāvana. The Nāga-pañcamī is observed in different ways in all parts of India. Some hold that, Instead of Akṣayya-tritīya, Nāga-pañcamī is the one half auspicious day out of 3 ¼ most auspicious days in the year. Briefly, the Bhaviṣya says when people on the 5th bathe with milk the Nāgas called Vasuki, Takṣaka, Kāliya, Mani-bhadra, Airāvata, Dhrtarāstra, Karkotaka and Dhananjaya, these give *abhaya* (freedom from danger) to their families. A legend is told (in Bhaviṣya I. 52) that Kadru, mother of Nāgas, had a bet with her sister Vinatā about the colour of the tail of Indra's horse called Uccaiḥ-śravas, Kadru asserting that the tail was black though the horse was white and Vinatā saying that the body and tail were white and when the Nāgas refused to practice the deceit whereby they were to become the dark hair in the horse's tail, Kadru cursed them that fire would burn them (in the *sarpa-sattra* of Janamejaya).



Persons should make golden, silver or clay images of Nāgas, should worship them with Karavīra and Jātī flowers and incense etc, feed Brāhmaṇas with ghee, *pāyasam* etc. and should bathe Nāgas with milk. The result would be that Nāgas would bestow on the worshippers safety (from snake-bite) The Bhaviṣyottara Purāna (chap 36) contains another method. On Śrāvana 5th (bright half) a person should draw on both sides of his door with cow dung figures of serpents which should be worshipped with curds, durva tendrils, kuśas and sandalwood paste, flowers and presents of food. They would have no danger from snakes. In Saurashtra Nāga-pañcamī is observed in Śrāvana dark half.

2. Manasā-pūjā

It appears that in Bengal and south India (but not in Mahārāstra) there is worship of Manasādevī in one's own courtyard on a branch of the *snuhī* plant on the 5th of Śrāvana dark half. First, there is a saṅkalpa about the worship of Manasā Devī in order to get rid of the danger from snake-bite, then one offers *gandha*, flowers, incense, lamp and *naivedya* and then Ananta and other Nāgas are offered worship, the principal item being naivedya of milk and ghee. Nimba

leaves are placed inside the house and the performer eats them and also makes Brāhmaṇas eat them. The Brahmavaivarta Purāna devotes two chapters (45-46) to the birth of Manasā-devī, her *pūjā* and stotra (praise) &c.

In the Deccan on Śrāvana bright half 5th figures of snakes are drawn with red sandalwood paste on wooden boards, or clay images of snakes colored yellow or black are purchased and worshipped and given milk and snake charmers go about with snakes of all sorts, to which people offer milk and some money is paid to the snake charmers.

If pañcami is mixed with the 4th and 6th tithis, that mixed with the 6th is to be preferred. The Vrata-kāla-viveka speaks of Manasā-vrata on Jyeṣṭha-śukla 10th with Hasta-nakṣatra or without it and remarks that when this vrata is performed Manasā goddess protects a man from the danger of poisonous snakes.

How and when serpent worship arose in India is a difficult problem. The Rig Veda contains no reference to snake worship on the contrary the Vedic god Indra is said to be the killer of *ahi* (a serpent) in Rig 2. 30. 1, II. 19. 3 and the slaughter of *ahi* is frequently mentioned as in Rig. 2:65. 6, 3:47:4. That *ahi* meant a serpent with a hood is clear from &. 5:75:14 (*ahiriva bhogaih paryeti bāhum*). In Br. Up IV. 4.7 and Prāsna IV. 5 there are references to the cast-off slough of serpents (mentioned as '*pādodara*' whose feet are inside its body) and in Rig IX. 86 44 (*ahir na Jūrnāmati sarpati tvacam*) also. But in many passages of the Rig-Veda (such as I 32:11) *ahi* appears to have a metaphorical sense and refers to a demon like Vṛtra that prevented waters from flowing down. In the Tai. S. IV. 2.8.3. and Vaj. (XIII. 6-8) there are three verses that contain salutations to serpents. In the Atharva Veda (VIII. 14. 13-15) there is a reference to serpents some of which like Takṣaka and Dhrtarāstra are named.

The Kāthaka Su. 6 enumerates the pitrs, sarpas, gandharvas, waters and herbs as *pañcajana*, and the Ait Br. Su I. 7 asserts that gods, humans, gandharvas, apsarases, snakes and pitrs were *pañcajana*. This cannot be the meaning of '*pañca-janāh*' in Rig. X.53:4. The above passages show that sarpas had come to be a clan like gandharvas in late Vedic times.

In the Aśv. gr II.1:1-15. the Paraskara-grhya sūtra and other grhya sūtras a rite called '*sarpabali*' (offering to serpents) was performed on the Full Moon day of Śrāvana.

The Nāgas figure frequently in the Mahābharata enumerating the names of many Nāgas. Arjuna while engaged in his twelve years vow of brahmācārya came to the country of the Nāgas (probably a tribe that had Nāga as their emblem) and took as his wife Ulupī, a Nāga princess who was smitten by love. Babhruvāhana, son of Citrangadā, fought with Arjuna who had come to Manipura for protecting the Aśvamedha horse, was killed by Babhruvahana and restored to life with the help of a Sanjīvana jewel (Aśvamedhika-parva chap. 79-81). Serpents came to be associated with both Viṣṇu and Śiva. Viṣṇu is said to

sleep on the hoods of Sesa-Nāga (Vana-parva 203.12 and 272. 38-39) and Śiva wears serpents on his body like yajñopavita (Anusāsana 14. 55). In the Bhagavadgītā X.28-29 Lord Kṛṣṇa identifies himself with Vāsuki among serpents and Ananta among Nāgas. What difference is made between 'sarpa' and 'nāga' is not clear. Probably 'sarpa' means all creeping things, while nāga means 'the cobra'.

It appears that serpent worship arose gradually from the fear of serpents that must have taken a heavy toll of life, particularly at the beginning of the rainy season. Even in these days about 10000 people die of snake-bite every year in India, while persons killed by all wild animals are hardly 3000. Why the tithi was changed from Full Moon (for Sarpa-bali in the grhya sūtras) to the 5th of the bright half is not clear. It may be due to the slight change in the time of the onset of rains owing to the precession of the equinoxes. Stone images of serpents under sacred trees like *pīppala* are common in the Dravida country and a few temples dedicated to Nāgas exist such as the one at Battis Shirālen in Satara District and at Bhom-parānden in Hyderabad.

3. Rakṣābandhana

On the Full Moon of Śrāvana there is in the afternoon a ceremony called *Rakṣābandhana* (tying the protective amulet). One should at sunrise on Full Moon of Śrāvana and after offering *tarpana* to gods, sages and pitrs, get prepared a protective amulet containing whole rice grains and mustard and decorated with gold (thread) and strung together with variously colored threads and have such an amulet tied.

In the case of a king, a Jar should be placed on a square raised in the palace and the king should occupy his seat together with his ministers, he should be surrounded by courtesans and music and benedictory words should be recited, gods, Brāhmaṇas and arms should be first honoured, then the royal priest should tie the amulet to the accompaniment of the mantra:—

“I tie on you that whereby Bali, the very powerful king of demons, was bound protective amulet don't slip off, don't slip off.”

Every one including Śūdras and others should get the amulet tied after honoring priests according to one's ability. When this is done, one lives on happily for a year. Hemādri quotes Bhavisyottara for the story that Indrānī tied on the right hand of Indra a protective amulet whereby he was enabled to vanquish the *asuras*. This tying should not be done when purnima is mixed up with either 14th or the following pratipad it may, in order to avoid these two, be done even at night.

This ceremony of tying an amulet on the right wrist is still in vogue and priests go about tying these amulets and receive some fee. Women in Gujarati and some other places tie silken amulets round the wrists of their brothers and give

and receive presents

On the Full Moon day of Śrāvana it is usual on the sea coast of western India (particularly in Konkan and Malabar) not only for Hindus, but also for Moslems and Parsis of the merchant class to go to the sea and offer flowers and a coconut to the sea. The sea becomes less rough and the violence of the monsoon winds abates after the full Moon of Śrāvana and the coconut is offered to the sea god Varuna) in order that he may make sea voyage for vessels of merchandise safe

4. Kṛṣṇa-Janmaṣṭami

In Śrāvana on the 8th of the dark half is celebrated the Kṛṣṇa-Janmaṣṭami or Janmaṣṭami vrata and festival, which is probably the most important vrata and utsava celebrated throughout the whole of India in some Purāna passages it is declared that Janmaṣṭami is celebrated on the 8th of the dark half of Bhādrapada. The explanation is that in those passages the months are Purnimānta and the dark half is in these months the first pakṣa.

It would not be out of place to say a few words about Kṛṣṇa and about the antiquity of Kṛṣṇa worship. There is a reference in the Chāṇḍogya-upanishad (III:17:6) to Kṛṣṇa Devakiputra receiving instruction from Ghora Angirasa. There was a Vedic poet named Kṛṣṇa who calls upon the Aśvins to listen to his invocation in Rig VIII 85.3 and the Anukramani assigns Rig Veda. 86-87 to Kṛṣṇa Angirasa. Jain tradition regards Kṛṣṇa as contemporaneous with Nemi, the 22nd Tirthankara, and from the account of the 63 great men of Jain pre-history about one third are shown as associated with Kṛṣṇa. The life of Kṛṣṇa as gathered from the Mahābharata is a composite one. In some passages he is depicted as a Yādava prince, the staunchest friend of the Pāṇḍavas (and particularly of Arjuna), as a great warrior, statesman and philosopher. In other passages he is identified with the Supreme Lord of the worlds and as Viṣṇu Himself.²⁵ There are most sublime praises of Kṛṣṇa put in the mouths of Yudhisthira (Drona 149.16-33). Draupadi (Vanaparva. 263. 8-16) and Bhishma when about to die (Anusasana 167. 37-45). We have further information about him from the Harivamsa the Viṣṇu Purāna, Vāyu, the Bhagavata and Brahmavaivarta that deal with Kṛṣṇa's romantic career among cowherds, which is wanting in the Mahābharata.

It appears from Pānini (IV.3.98) that there were people of his day who were called *Vāsudevaka* and *Arjunaka* that were devoted to Vasudeva and Arjuna. Patañjali in his Mahābhāṣya gives two examples '*kamsam, ghātayati* ('he tells the story of Kṛṣṇa') and *balim bandhayati* ('he narrates the story of the imprisonment of Bali') On Vārtika 2 to Pan III.2.111 Patañjali gives the example *jaghāna kamasam khila vāsudevah* — 'Vāsudeva they say, killed Kamsa' — and implies that the incident occurred long ago which the speaker

²⁵ (Sānti 47.28, Drona 146. 67-68, Karna 87. '14, Vana parva 49. 20, Bhishma 21. 13-15).

could not have seen but was popularly known. Under Vārtika 7 Patañjali mentions *Ugrasena* as a scion of the andhakas and Vasudeva and Baladeva of the Vrishnis. Patañjali quotes half an anustubh verse — “*sañkarṣaṇa dvitīyasya balam kṛṣṇasya vardhatām.*” Most scholars regard Patañjali as having lived in the 2nd century BCE. (about 150 BCE.). This proves that the incidents of Kṛṣṇa’s life had to have been composed some centuries before the Christian era.

The Ghosundi inscription of 2nd or 1st century BCE. mentions the hall of worship of Sankarsana and Vasudeva addressed as '*Bhagavat*' and '*sarveśvara*', Nanaghat cave inscriptions of about 200 So C mention both. The 'Besnagar column (Garuḍa-dhvaja) Vaiṣṇava inscription where the *Bhagavata* Heliodorus, son of Diya, hailing from Takṣasila and Yāvana ambassador of king Antalikita. (Antalkidas) to king 'Bhaga-bhadra mentions Vasudeva as '*devadeva*'. The preceding items of evidence indicate that the worship of Vasudeva was prevalent in northern and central India from at least 500 BCE. if not earlier.²⁶

The important question is whether the *Janmaṣṭami* and *Jayantī-vrata* are really only one vrata or whether they are two separate vratas. The *Kāla-nirṇaya*, after a long discussion in which Mīmāmsa principles outlined in Jai II. 2:23 and IV. 1. 22-24 are relied upon, arrives at the conclusion that the two are separate Vratas on the grounds that the two names are different (*Janmaṣṭami-vrata* and *Jayantī-vrata*), their occasions (*nimitta*) are different (the first depends only on dark Aṣṭami, while the latter exists only if there is Rohini on 8th of dark half of Śrāvana) and their characteristics are different.

In that in *Janmaṣṭami vrata* Śāstra requires only a fast, while in *Jayantī-vrata* the Śāstra requires a fast and also gifts and the like. Besides, *Janmaṣṭami vrata* is obligatory (*nitya*), since the texts only speak of the incurring of sin if it be not performed, while *Jayantī-vrata* is both *nitya* and *kāmya* in that the śāstras connected with special rewards in addition to the incurring of sin by its non-observance. Further, the two are separately mentioned in the same verses. But the N. S notes that in its day people observed only *Janmaṣṭami vrata* and not *Jayantī-vrata*. On the other hand the *Jayantī-nirṇaya* states that people generally celebrate *Jayantī* only (and not *Janmaṣṭami*). This variance is probably due to the fact that the two works (N.S. and J.N.) belong to the north and south of India. The *Samayamayūkha* and *Purusārtha-cintāmani* (p.117) very severely criticize the views of Mādhava set out above from the *Kāla-nirṇaya*, one of the principal arguments in these last being that the Mīmāmsa rules relied upon by Mādhava apply to rites, but *Jayantī* is the name of a tithi i.e. the 8th of dark half when conjoined to Rohinī. The *Jayantī-nirṇaya* of Harita Venkaṭanatha holds that the two are different and that both are *nitya* as well as *kāmya* (pp. 4-5 and p. 30). It

²⁶ Vide R G. 'Bhandarkar's 'Vaiṣṇavism, Saivism etc.' Pp. 1-4:5 for the various phases of the Kṛṣṇa cult and its antiquity.

further points out that in Janmaṣṭami vrata tithis the principal matter while in Jayantī it is the nakṣatra (Rohinī) that is principal.

Two discordant notes are struck by the Varāha-Purāna and by the Harivamsa. The former says that Kṛṣṇa was born on 12th of Āṣāḍha bright half. According to the Harivamśa quoted by Hemādri and Jīmutavāhana, the nakṣatra was Abhijit when Kṛṣṇa was born and the Muhūrta was *vijaya*. It is quite possible that these two represent some older traditions about the date of the birth of Kṛṣṇa.

It is clear from almost all Purānas and other works on Janmaṣṭami that the principal time for the celebration of the birth of Kṛṣṇa is the midnight of the 8th of Śrāvana dark half (Bhadrapada dark, if the month is Purnimānta). This tithi is of two kinds viz.

- (1) without Rohinī nakṣatra and
- (2) with Rohinī nakṣatra.

In each of these two, the digests set out several possible alternative combinations. The Nirṇayāmṛta mentions as many as 18 kinds: eight of the *śuddha* tithi, 8 of the *viddhā* tithi and two more, one being the one where Rohinī nakṣatra is there at midnight and the other being Navami joined to Rohini and having either Wednesday or Monday.

The brief conclusions put forth by the Tithi-tattva are given by way of sample. These are:— If Jayantī (Aṣṭami with Rohinī) exists only a single day, the fast must be observed on that very day if it spreads over two days, then the fast is on the later of the two if there is no Jayantī, then the fast is to be observed on Aṣṭami Joined with Rohinī, if two days have Aṣṭami



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joined to Rohinī, then fast is on the later of the two if there is no Rohinī nakṣatra then fast is to be observed on the Aṣṭami that exists at midnight or if aṣṭami exists on two days at midnight or if it be not existent at midnight then on the later day. if Jayantī fast occurs on Wednesday or Monday there are far greater results and such a fast is superior to thousands of other vratas and the person who observes a fast on Jayantī conjoined to Wednesday or Monday would not be born again.

The main items in Kṛṣṇa-Janmaṣṭami are fast, worship of Kṛṣṇa, *jāgara* (keeping awake at night, listening to and repeating hymns of praise and stories about Kṛṣṇa's exploits), *pāranā*.

A brief summary from the Tithitattva and the Samayamayūkha (which agree in the main in most respects) is set out below.

On the day of the fast in the morning the devotee should invoke the presence of the Sun, Moon, Yama, Time, the two twilights, the (five) elements, Day and Night, Wind, the lord of the quarters, the earth, the sky, the denizens of aerial regions and gods. He should hold in his hand a copper vessel filled with water, some fruits, flowers and whole rice-grains, refer to the month &c and make a saṅkalpa:—

'I shall perform the Kṛṣṇa-Janmaṣṭami-vrata, for securing a certain reward or for the removal of my sins'.

He then repeats four mantras addressed to Vasudeva. After repeating the mantras he should discharge the water in the vessel. He should construct a delivery hall for Devakī having auspicious jars full of water and mango leaves, garlands of flowers, fragrant with burnt *aguru* and day and decked with auspicious things and Ṣaṣṭhi-Devī. Round about the room or the walls (of the room) he should paint gods and gandharvas with folded hands, Vāsudeva with a drawn sword, Devaki, Nandā, gopis, Kamsa's guards, the river Yamuna and the snake Kaliya therein and other incidents of Gokula as far as he could. He should place in the delivery hall a bed surrounded by screens. He should take a bath with sesame in the noon in the water of a river or the like and at midnight make the saṅkalpa, 'I shall perform the worship of Kṛṣṇa with his attendants'. He should make an image of Kṛṣṇa of gold or silver &c, touch the cheeks of the image and vitalize the image (*prāṇa-pratiṣṭha*) with mantras.

He should contemplate upon Devaki (with a mantra) and on Sri Kṛṣṇa lying as an infant on the bed and offer worship to Lakṣmi, to Vasudeva and Devaki, Nandā and Baladeva and Caṇḍika with appropriate mantras for bath, for incense, naivedya &c.; he then briefly performs symbolically the ceremonies of Jātakarma, cutting the navel chord, Ṣaṣṭhi-pūjā and namakarana. Then at time of moonrise (at or a little after midnight) he should offer *arghya* on an altar or to (image of) the moon with Rohini with water from a conch mixed with flowers, kuśas and sandalwood paste with a mantra,



should bow to the moon and prostrate himself with several verses containing the different names of Vāsudeva and at the end address prayers to him. Then he should keep awake the whole night in listening to the hymn of praise to Kṛṣṇa, to the stories in the Purānas and in songs, music and dances. Next day after performing all usual acts to be performed in the morning and again offering worship to the image of God Kṛṣṇa, he should feed brāhmanas and donate to them gold, cow, clothes with the words:— 'May Kṛṣṇa be pleased with me', He should then repeat the mantra — 'salutation to him who is Brahmā, who is Vāsudeva of blessed birth and beneficent to cows and brāhmaṇas and to whom Devaki gave birth from Vasudeva for the protection of Vedas spread over the

earth. Let there be peace! Let there be bliss! He should then take out the image of Kṛṣṇa, donate it to a brāhmaṇa and bring the vrata to a close after performing pāranā.

The procedure in the Dharma-sindhu (pp. 68-69) is more elaborate than the above, though no essential difference exists. It makes use of Vedic mantras (from Rig. X.90.1-16) along with Paurānika mantras, while in the Samaya-mayūkha and Tithitattva no Vedic mantra is expressly mentioned. As regards *Jāgara* the Dharma-sindhu provides that the stories about Kṛṣṇa may be made striking by reciting poems composed in regional languages, that Vedic hymns may have at their end Paurānika stories recited, that visual representations (such as dances) may be resorted to, that this is a procedure meant for the three higher Varnas, but in the case of Śūdras it is not proper to follow the same procedure; they should omit Vedic hymns but may engage in music and Pauranika recitations.

One question often raised in some of the medieval digests on Dharma-śāstra is: what is the principal matter in Janmaṣṭami vrata? Some held that both fast (*upavāsa*) and worship (*Pūjā*) are principal and they rely on a Bhaviṣya-Purāna passage:—

'when at midnight on the 8th of the dark half there is Rohinī, worship of Kṛṣṇa destroys sins committed in three lives; a man observing a fast then and performing worship of Hari does not sink'.

The Samaya-mayūkha, after an elaborate discussion in which Mīmāṃsa doctrines such as those in Jai 1. 4.1-3 are employed, arrives at the conclusion that the fast is only an auxiliary (*aṅga*), while worship (*pūjā*) is the principal thing. On the other hand the Tithi-tattva relying on the verse of the Bhaviṣya opening the description of the vrata — 'On that day one should accept the restrictions of Upavāsa,' and also Mīmāṃsa doctrines holds that upavāsa is the principal matter and pūjā is an *aṅga* (auxiliary matter).

It has already been stated above that every vrata requires a *pāranā* as the last item, that *pāranā* takes place the day after the day of the fast and that it is generally performed in the morning. There are certain special rules about the *pāranā* of Janmaṣṭami fast and Jayantī fast. A few dicta of the purānas may be first noted. The Brahmavaivarta states—

'One should never perform pāranā while aṣṭami tithi is running at Rohini nakṣatra is still there on the Aṣṭami (if one does so) one destroys what he has done previously and the fruits acquired by the fast. A tithi destroys eight-fold, while a nakṣatra does so fourfold: therefore one should perform the *pāranā* (of Janmaṣṭami) at the end of the tithi and nakṣatra'.

The Nārada Purāna remarks:—

‘when a fast has to be observed on the conjunction of a tithi and nakṣatra, *pāranā* should not be done until at least one of the two has ended when a vrata falls on a conjunction (of tithi and nakṣatra), *pāranā* should be done only when one of the two is separated (i.e. ends)’.

Both the Tithitattva and the Kṛtyatattva arrive on interpreting these and other verses at the following conclusions *pāranā* is to be observed on the day after the fast, but after the end of the tithi (aṣṭami) and the nakṣatra (Rohini), but when one of the two ends before *mahāniśā* and the other during *mahāniśā* 'or after it, *pāranā* should be observed at the end of one of the two when both exist during the period of mahānala then one should perform *pāranā* in the morning at the end of the festival '. At the end of the *pāranā* the performer repeats the mantra.

‘salutations to Govinda, who is Being, who is the ruler of (all) beings, who is the lord of (all) beings and who is the source of all beings’.

The above statement shows that in certain cases the *pāranā* of Janmaṣṭami vrata may be at night, 'particularly' for vaiṣṇavas who perform the vrata as a duty and not for any reward.

There is a difference of meaning between *udyāpana* and *pāranā*. Some vratas like Ekādaśi and Janmaṣṭami are performed throughout one's life in such cases there is only *pāranā* after the fast on every occasion that a fast is observed. If one undertakes a vrata only once and finishes it, then the concluding rites of the vrata are called *udyāpana*.

Besides the items mentioned above, it is the practice, particularly of boys and common people in Mahārāstra, to hang up pots full of curds and buttermilk on the day after the birth of Kṛṣṇa is celebrated, to play underneath the pot, sing songs and then pierce the pot and get drenched by curds and buttermilk running out from the holes made. This is probably due to the legends associated with Kṛṣṇa's boyhood among cowherds. The Bhagavata expressly says that the cowherds sprinkled each other on Kṛṣṇa's birth with curds, milk, ghee, and smeared each other with these. Kṛtyakalpa-taru in the Naiyatakāla section of gives a brief procedure of Kṛṣṇa Janmaṣṭami (which is word for word the same in the Kṛtyaratnākara) different from the one specified above from the Tithitattva and other works is set out. It is as follows:—

“On the 8th of the dark half of Bhādrapada was born in Kaliyuga. in the 28th (kalpa?), Kṛṣṇa, son of Devaki, for removing the burden (of the earth) and the reduction of kṣatriyas. He (his image) should therefore be worshipped on that day, as also (of) Devaki and Yaśoda with sandalwood paste, flowers, incense, various fruits and foods and dishes prepared from barley and wheat together with cow's milk. At night the devotee should keep awake with songs and dances. Then on the 9th about the time of *arunodaya* (4 ghaṭikas before sunrise) women dressed in red clothes and decked with garlands of flowers should carry the images of these (Kṛṣṇa, Devaki and Yaśoda) to a holy river bank or to a charming and unfrequented lake, wherein they should themselves take then bath and also bathe the

images then returning home they should eat a meal of barley together with jaggery, honey, ghee and black pepper.”

Before closing this account of Janmaṣṭami reference must be made to a paper read in 1867 before the Berlin Akademie der Wissenschaften by the renowned German scholar, Prof. A Weber. The subject of the paper was ‘An investigation into the origin of the festival of Kṛṣṇa-janmaṣṭami and the paper was divided into two parts, the first dealt with the sources (an English translation of it by E. Rehatsek was published in Indian Antiquary vol. VI pp. 161-180 and pp. 281-301). the 2nd dealt with ritual, the 3rd part was the most important and was concerned with a novel theory, viz. the ritual of Kṛṣṇa-janmaṣṭami festival was something transferred from outside of India, that the description in the ritual of Kṛṣṇa’s village as suckling at the mother’s (Devaki's) breast was the keystone of the theory of this ritual as of foreign origin and that it was suggested by pictorial representations of the Madonna with a suckling child (Christ) &c. An English translation of this part appeared in Indian Antiquary vol. III pp. 21-25 and pp. 47-52. This paper though it is a monument of learning and patient industry (for that period when very few Sanskrit books had been printed) gave rise to severe criticism owing to its fantastic and perverse conclusion about Kṛṣṇa-janmaṣṭami ritual being borrowed from Christian representations of Christ and his mother Mary. In IA. vol. mp. 300 Growse attacked it very severely. In spite of all criticisms the tenacious German scholar stuck to his guns and launched an attack against his critics. particularly against Dr. Rajendralal Mitra. in I.A. vol. IX. pp. 226-229. As hardly any Sanskrit scholar in these days would espouse the theory put forward by Weber. I do not think that I should waste much time over a refutation thereof. Most European scholars nurtured on the vaunted intellectual eminence of the ancient Greeks and on the intolerant attitude of Christianity towards other faiths when they became acquainted with things Indian and studied Sanskrit, were obsessed (though not very obviously expressed) by two notions. viz. much in India that resembled what prevailed 'in the West must have been borrowed from the West and further, that Indians, who had allowed themselves to be invaded by outsiders and governed by foreigners for centuries. must not have been good at anything. These two notions gave rise to many untenable theories such as the following:— the Rāmāyana was borrowed from Homer's Iliad, the art of writing was unknown to Panini the Brahmi script was based on Phoenician or Aramaic script, that the Gita was based on the Bible, that the wry ancient Indian nakṣatra system was borrowed either from the Chinese, the Babylonians or Arabs. Most of such theories were the result of little knowledge and the non-recognition of certain common sense rules and have now been consigned to the limbo of deserved oblivion. The common sense rule is that when a thing or a state of things has existed for centuries in a certain country or among a certain people the burden of proving that it was borrowed by that country or people from outside is very heavy on those who assert such borrowing mere similarities can never be held to amount to any evidence of

borrowing at all scholars should be very chary of confidently asserting borrowing and should put forward their conclusions very cautiously. It would not be irrelevant to point out the main circumstances on which Weber, often a champion of lost causes, relied for his theory.

The first is that in the ritual of Kṛṣṇa-janmaṣṭami contained in some digests (that said that they borrowed the passage from Bhavisyottara) the image of Kṛṣṇa was to be shown as suckling at the breast of Devaki, that this is a unique direction, that in the Rāmanavami festival which is similar to janmaṣṭami the image of Rāma is not required to be suckling at the breast of Kausalya, that this detail was copied from the representation of the *Madonna Lactans*. Weber relied (vide Ia vol. in p. 51) on one De Bassi who said that pictures of infant Christ at the breast existed in 2nd century A D. Weber brushed aside the testimony of other scholars that the Madonna with the child was a subject little known to the early Christian centuries and the opinion of other scholars that the representations of the *Madonna Lactans* are extremely rare in Byzantine and Russian art (Ia vol. in p 48) and almost always of very late date. Weber makes a mountain of a molehill. The image of Rāma is also described as lying on the lap of the mother Kausalya. Further, all Purānas do not provide that the image of Kṛṣṇa was to be suckling at the breast. Hemādri, in describing the Jayantī-vrata from the Purānas, shows that the image was to be on the lap of the mother Devaki. Was the Hindu imagination so poor that when they could describe the image of Rāma or Kṛṣṇa as lying on the mother's lap they could not also imagine that it could be shown as suckling at the breast and had to run to the West to copy that detail from representations of the Madonna and the child thousands of miles away?

The 2nd point made much of by Weber was that Narada is represented as having brought from Śveta-dvipa (white land) the doctrine of salvation by faith. Weber holds that Śveta-dvipa was Alexandria while Lassen holds that it was Parthia if we read the description of Śveta-dvipa in the Shanti parva (chapters 336-339) and in such Purānas as Vamana (chap. 25.16 and 60. 56) and Kurma (149) it would be only that Śveta-dvipa was an imaginary or mythical place where everything was white, where Viṣṇu and the gods dwelt and that it had no earthly existence at least in the minds of the authors who wrote the above works.

The third important point according to Weber was that certain incidents in Kṛṣṇa's life such as Kaliya-mardana are similar to those in Christianity. Weber himself says that victory over Kaliya is a travesty of the Christian tradition of the serpent. It appears to me that there is nothing common between the two except the word 'serpent'.

CHAPTER 7

1. Haritālikā

Celebrated on the 3rd tithi of the bright half of Bhādrapada by women alone. It is described only in the later medieval digests like the Nirṇaya-sindhu, Vratarka, Vratarāja. Rājamārtaṇḍa of Bhoja (first half of 11th century A D.) devotes four verses to Haritālikā caturthi on Bhādrapada 4th of bright half and says that it is dear to Pārvati. It is very much in vogue among Mahārashtra women. The following is a brief description.

The woman should take an oil and myrobalan paste bath and wear fine silken clothes. After referring to the tithi &c the woman should make saṅkalpa as noted below:— She should bow to Uma and Śiva; she should offer worship to Uma by means of the 16 upacāras with appropriate mantras such as āvāhana (invoking to be present) āsana (seat), pādya, arghya etc. After offering flowers the performer should carry out worship of the limbs of Uma from the feet in the form 'bow to Uma, I worship her feet' to the head. Then she should offer incense, lamp, naivedya, ācamaniya, fragrant substances like camphor and sandalwood for rubbing on



the hands, betel nut, tambula, dakṣina, ornaments, nirājana (waving of a lamp). She should then offer worship to the several names of Umā (such as Gauri, Pārvati &c.) and the several names of Śiva such as Hara, Mahādeva, Sambhu &c.) and present a handful of flowers, and go round (pradakṣina) the images of Uma and Mahesvara, make with an appropriate mantra in each case an obeisance and a prayer and donate presents placed in vessels of wickerwork together with auspicious substances.

This vrata is not prevalent in Bengal nor in Gujarat. In modern times women purchase colored clay images of Parvati, of Śiva Liṅga and a friend of Pārvatī and worship them.

It is difficult to say why the vrata is called Haritālikā. The Vrataraja (p. 108) says it is *vratarāja* (the prince among vratas) and was so called because Parvati was taken away (from home) by her friends.

The Vratarāja contains a story said to have been narrated by Śiva himself to Pārvatī about the vrata by performing which she secured him as her husband and also the position of being half of Śiva's body. The Varāha-Purāna (chap. 22)

contains a long narrative about the marriage of Gaurī with Śiva.

2. Gaṇeśa Caturthi

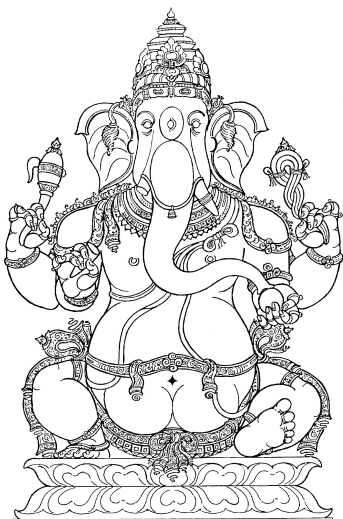
On the 4th of the bright half of Bhādrapada is observed the festival of Gaṇeśa-caturthi in many parts of India (though not in Bengal or Gujarat). According to the Samaya-mayūkha, Gaṇeśa-caturthi is also called *Vināyaka-caturthi*. The proper time for the performance is midday, as said by Brhaspati quoted in the Kāla-nirṇaya. Every one knows the story about the clearance of Kṛṣṇa from a false charge would not be liable to have a false charge made against him by anyone. The Tithi-tattva provides that if a person inadvertently sees the moon on the night of the 4th in Bhādra (śukla) he should repeat the verse of the nurse quoted above over some water, drink it and should listen to the story of the Syāmantaka jewel.

When Gaṇeśa is worshipped on Bhādra 4th of bright half, that tithi is called, according to Bhaviṣya, Śiva, when Gaṇeśa is honored on Magha-śukla 4 it is called *Śānta*, and when 4th of the bright half the weekday is Tuesday that caturthi is called *Sukhā*.

In modern times the worship lasts for one day and a half, for two days, 5 days, 7 days or till Ananta-caturdasi (14th of bright half of Bhādra), according to the usages of the certain parts of the Deccan and among common people it is customary to perform Gaurī pūjā on 7th and 8th of Bhādrapada śukla and immerse Gaurī (represented by a sheaf of plants) and Gaṇeśa image on the same day and at the same time on 9th.

Gaṇeśa is the most popular god in these days and it is the practice to invoke him at the beginning of every important undertaking or rite. He is the God of wisdom, the presiding deity of literature, the bestower of success and the destroyer of obstacles.

Antiquity of Gaṇeśa worship



The Brahmavaivarta-purāna has a section called Gaṇeśa khāṇḍa. (in 46 chapters), wherein several legends about Gaṇeśa are dwelt upon. The Ganapatyatharvasirsa, imitating the style of such ancient Upanishads as the Taittiriya, Brhadaranyaka and Chandogya, identifies Ganapati with the Highest Brahma. The Ahalyā-kamadhenu quotes passages from Bhavisyottara-Purāna on Gaṇeśa caturthi. Several legends are told about Gaṇeśa, his elephant head, his single tusk.

One of the most fantastic is the one in the Varāha Purāṇa (chap 23) where it is said that from the laugh of Śiva sprang a very handsome boy whom Pārvatī looked at with admiring eyes when Śiva's Jealousy was aroused and he cursed the boy to be elephant-headed and pot-bellied and then he relented and made him the chief of all Vināyakas.

The Kṛtykalpataru (on vrata) quotes a passage from the Narasimha-Purāna about Ganeśa-caturthi-vrata, which also occurs among several vratas about Ganeśa set out in Hemādri. It differs considerably from the celebration of Ganeśa-caturthi described above. A few important points are stated here is described as having one, two or four tusks and as having four arms. It is further stated that Ganeśa causes obstacles (*vighna*) if not worshipped at the beginning of every undertaking. Ganeśa assumed the form of an elephant for effecting the purposes of gods and thereby frightened all dānavas.

3. Rishi-pañcamī

On the 5th tithi of the bright half of Bhādrapada occurs the *Rishi-pañcamī-vrata*. It was meant for males of all varṇas but is now mostly practiced by women. Hemādri describes the vrata at length quoting from the Brahmānda-purāna. One should, after bathing in a river or the like and after performing his daily duties, repair to his agnihotra shed, should bathe with Pañcāmṛta the images of the seven sages and, anointing them with sandalwood paste and camphor, worship them with flowers, fragrant substances, incense, lamp, white clothes and yajñopavītas and sumptuous naivedya and offer them arghya with the mantra noted below. One should, when engaged in this vrata, subsist on vegetables alone and observe celibacy. The result is freedom from all sins and from troubles of three kinds and the increase of one's good fortune. If a woman performs this vrata she enjoys happiness, becomes endowed with good bodily form, beauty and sons and grandsons.

Later medieval digests like Vrataraja add details and a story from Bhaviṣyottara narrated to Yudhisthira by Kṛṣṇa. The sin of *Brahmahātya* (brāhmaṇa-murder) of which Indra became guilty by killing Vrtra, son of Tvastr, was distributed in four places; in Agni (the first flames mixed with smoke), rivers (turbid in the rains), mountains (on which trees exuding sticky gum grow) and among women (in their menstruation). Therefore this vrata should be performed particularly by women for getting rid of their untouchability during their menstruation.

The saṅkalpa is given below, also another detail is that the seven sages together with Arundhatī are to be worshipped it is further provided that one should subsist on vegetables or *nivāras* or *śyāmaka* grains or bulbous roots or fruits and should not eat anything produced by ploughing the land. Even in these days those who perform this vrata do not eat corn produced by employing oxen. In modern times if men perform the vrata the priest invokes for them seven sages with Vedic mantras viz. Rig Veda IX 114.2 (for Kaśyapa), Rig V.78.4 (for Atri).

Rig Veda VI.25.9 (for Bharadvāja), Rig Veda X.167. 4 (for Viśvamitra), Rig. I. 78. 1 (for Gotama), Rig. III. 62. 18 (for Jamadagni), Rig VII. 33. 11 (for Vasistha).

In this vrata the number seven is important. The vrata is to be performed for seven years, there are to be seven jars, seven Brahmins were to be invited to whom finally the images (made of gold or silver) of the seven sages were to be donated. If all the images were placed in one *kalaśa*, then the jar with the images was to be donated to one Brahmin and the others were to be given *kalaśas* with clothes and *dakṣina*.

If *pañcamī* is mixed up with the 4th tithi and the 6th tithi, one must perform the Rishi *pañcamī* Vrata on the 5th mixed with the 4th (*pūrva-viddha*) and not on 5th mixed with 6th, in accordance with the *Yugma-vākya* quoted above (n191) Besides, Hārīta expressly prohibits the acceptance of the 5th mixed with the 6th in the words (5th tithi mixed with the 4th should be accepted and not the 5th joined to the 6th, both in the bright and dark halves and in rites for the gods and *pitṛs*). But there is the most important rule laid down by Hārīta himself that in all vratas comprising worship the tithi to be selected is the one that covers mid-day. Supposing that the 5th tithi does not cover mid-day when joined with 4th, but covers mid-day when joined with 6th, the latter (*para-viddhā*) would have to be chosen. Hence there is divergence of view among the great writers.

It appears that originally the Rishi *pañcamī*-vrata was meant for the removal of sins for all, but later on it came to be specially provided for women.

4. Ananta-caturdaśī-vrata

On the 14th of the bright half of Bhādrapada is celebrated the Ananta-caturdaśī-vrata. It consists chiefly in the worship of Hari as Ananta and in wearing on the right hand in the case of men and on the left in the case of women a holy cord of thread dyed with saffron made of cotton or silk twisted into fourteen knots. It is an individual *pūjā* and not a festival of a socio-religious character. The Agni-Purāna gives a brief description as follows;

One should worship the image of Ananta (Hari) which is made of darbha grass placed in a vessel for water (a Jar). He should get ready flour of a *prastha* of paddy and make cakes from that, half of which should be donated to a Brahmin and the remaining half be should use for himself. One should perform this vrata on the bank of a river and listen to stories about Hari and (pray to Hari) as follows:— “O Vāsudeva save (people) sunk in the great and endless ocean of *samsāra* and make them apply themselves to the contemplation of the form of Ananta, salutation to thee that hast numerous forms.” Having worshipped (*Hari*) with this mantra and having tied on one's arm or round one's neck a string of threads over which a mantra has been uttered, the person who performs the Ananta-caturdaśī-vrata becomes happy if Hari is Ananta then fourteen knots may be deemed to symbolize the fourteen worlds created by Hari.

Hemādri has an elaborate description of Ananta-vrata together with the story of Kaundinya and his wife Śīlā told by Kṛṣṇa to Yudhisthira. Kṛṣṇa states that Ananta is one of his forms and identifies himself with Kāla (Time) that is called Ananta. Ananta should be worshipped with the *Upacāras* of sandalwood paste, incense, flowers, naivedya.



In front of (the image of) Ananta should be placed a *dorakā* dyed with saffron and having fourteen knots. The mantra should be recited and the *dorakā* tied on one's wrist, one should then dine with an easy mind after contemplating on Nārāyana as Ananta.

In the story it is narrated how because the husband Kaundinya from youthful rashness and pride cut the Ananta thread tied around his wife's hand he lost everything, then repented and was taken into favor by Ananta.

The Vratārka describes this vrata at great length.

Briefly it is this:— first sankalpa, then making the *sarvatobhadra maṇḍala* and placing a kalaśa thereupon on which is placed a nāga with seven hoods made of darbhas and in front of it a *dorakā* with 14 knots worshipping the *dorakā* on the jar with 16 upacaras with the Purusa-sukta (Rig. X. 90) and Paurānika mantras; 14 devatas of the knots from Viṣṇu to Vasus are invoked, then there is worship of the limbs from the feet upwards in such mantras as:— '*Anantāya namah padau pūjayāmi*: then a handful of flowers with the mantras of Viṣṇu, prayer to Ananta, tying the *dorakā* with a mantra, casting away the old *dorakā* after offering it worship. Salt is forbidden in this vrata. It was believed that if this vrata was performed for fourteen years one reached the world of Viṣṇu.

There is a variance in the views of eminent writers about the exact time and the tithi for the vrata when 14th is mixed with other tithis (13th or Purnima). Madhava holds that midday is not the *karmakāla* in this vrata, but that tithi which exists at sunrise for three *muhūrtas* is the most suitable one for Ananta-vrata. The Nirṇayasindhu holds that the Anantavrata is not mentioned in other Purānas and also in other digests and that the passages of the Bhaviṣya and Skanda quoted by others are baseless and unauthoritative.

There are even in these days many persons who engage in the Ananta-caturdaśi-vrata, but their numbers are rapidly diminishing.

CHAPTER 8.

NAVARĀTRA or DURGOTSAVA

From the 1st of Aśvina bright half to the 9th is celebrated the Durgā-pūjā festival, otherwise called Navarātra, observed all over India in some form or other. Some of the works provide that Durgotsava must be celebrated in both Autumn (Aśvina śukla) and Spring (in Caitra śukla). But it is the Durgotsava of Aśvina that is celebrated in a grand style, particularly in Bengal, Bihar and Kāmarūpa.

If a person is unable to celebrate the festival for nine days, he should do so for three days beginning from the 7th tithi of Aśvina-śukla in fact the Tithi-tattva puts forward several alternative periods for Durgā-pūjā as follows:

- (1) from the 9th tithi of the preceding dark half of Pūrnimānta Aśvina to the 9th tithi of Aśvina Śukla;
- (2) from the first tithi of śukla to 9th
- (3) from the 6th to the 9th
- (4:) from the 7th to the 9th
- (5) from the Mahāstami to the 9th
- (6) only on the Mahāstami;
- (7) only on the Mahānavamī.

Most of these alternatives find support in the Kālīka and other Purāṇas.

There is a voluminous literature on Durgotsava. Every digest on vratas, tithis and pūjā. devotes considerable space to this subject. Moreover, there are special treatises on Durgotsava or Navaratra, such as the Durgotsava-viveka of Sūlapani, the Durgā-pūjā-prayoga-tattva of which the Durgarcana-paddhati of Raghu-Nandāna (published by Jivanandā, vol. II) is a part, Durga-Bhaktitarangini of Vidyāpati, the Navarātra-pradīpa of Vināyaka *alias* Nandā-pandita, the Durgotsava-paddhati by Udayasimha. (2nd half of 15th century A. D.).

Besides these, the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa contains what is called Devī-mahātmya (or Saptasati or Caṇḍī) in which are described the appearance of Devī from the accumulated *tejas* of Viṣṇu, Sankara, Agni and other gods, her getting different weapons from the several gods such as the trident from Śiva, discus from Viṣṇu, Vajra from Indra, her victory over and slaughter of the demon Mahiṣāsura, and of the demons Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa. Śumbha and Niṣumbha.

This pūjā is *nitya* as well as *kāmya*, it is the first because Kalika-purāṇa 63:12-13 prescribes that whoever, through laziness, hypocrisy, hatred or stupidity does not celebrate this festival has all his desires frustrated by the angry Devī. It is

also kāmya because rewards are promised due to its celebration. The original purposes and objects of this festival were high and noble.

“This is a great and a holy vrata conferring great siddhis, vanquishing enemies, conferring benefits on all people, especially in great floods; this should be performed by Brāhmaṇas for solemn sacrifices by kṣatriyas for the protection of the people, by vaiśhyas for increase of cattle wealth and by sudras desirous of sons and happiness, by women for blessed longevity of their marriages, by the wealthy for increase of wealth; this was performed by Sankara and others.” (Devī Purāṇa)

But in the course of time, the objects were diminished in value as stated by the Devī-mahātmya —

“By listening with devotion to my greatness in the great annual pūjā performed in autumn, one becomes free from all troubles and becomes endowed with wealth and agricultural produce by my favor.”

The exaggerated importance of this Durga-pūjā will be clear from one verse of the Bhaviṣya rites like Agnihotra, solemn sacrifices described in the Vedas and completed with dakṣina are not equal even to one hundred-thousandth part of the worship of Caṇḍika.

This Durgā-pūjā is very cosmopolitan in character. It could be performed not only by persons belonging to the four varnas, but even by those who were outside the pale of the caste system. Durgā-pūjā as a congregational character and is not purely religious, but has also a social element in it (such as inviting friends and treating them &c). The Bhaviṣya Purāṇa says:—

“Devī should be worshipped (in her shrine) on Vindhya mountain, in all places, cities, houses, villages and forests by Brahmins, kṣatriyas, kings, vaiśyas, Śūdras, who are full of devotion, who have taken a bath and who are cheerful and jolly, by *mlecchas* and other men (such as *pratilomas*) and by women.”

in another place the Bhaviṣya states that:—

“Durga is worshipped by various groups of *mlecchas*, by all *dasyus* (thievish tribes or outcaste Hindus), by people from Anga, Vanga and Kaliṅga, by *kinnaras*, *Barbaras* (non-Aryans) and *Sakas*.”

Later medieval writers were careful to point out that *mlecchas* had no *adhikāra* to perform *Japa* or *homa* or *pūjā* with mantras through a Brāhmaṇa as Śūdras had, but they could only mentally resolve to offer in honor of Devī animals as offerings and wine till also and do so.

It is stated in the Skanda and Bhaviṣya Purāṇas that the worship of Caṇḍikā in autumn (Aśvina) is of a threefold viz. *sāttvika*, *rājasika* and *tāmasika*, the *sāttvikā* worship is effected by *japa*, by offering *naivedya* in which there is no meat; and *japa* consists in reciting the texts of the Purāṇas. In which the greatness of Devī is described; *rajas* worship is effected by offering a *bali* and with *naivedya* which contains flesh; that is *tāmasik* worship which is effected by the offerings of wine and meat and from which *Japa* is absent and which is without mantras, this last is approved among *Kirāṭas* (forest tribes) Raghu-

Nandāna ands in his tattva that the offering of wine in Durgā-pūjā relates to ages other than the Kali age (i.e. other than the present age).

It has been stated that the principal gods are deemed to go to sleep for four months on different tithi from the *pratipad* (1st) of Āṣāḍha-Śukla to the 15th. Therein Durgā is said to go to sleep on the 8th of the bright half of Āṣāḍha. Therefore, in Aśvina she would be asleep. Hence the texts provide for the rousing (*bodhana*) of Devī from sleep. As usual there are conflicting views. The Tithi-tattva notices the views of some that if the Devī is to be worshipped as having 18 arms she was to be worshipped on the 9th of the dark half preceding Aśvina bright half, but that if she was to be worshipped as possessing 10 arms then the *bodhana* was to be on the 6th (of the bright half of Aśvina) Raghunandana does not accept this and holds that the *bodhana* of Devī with 10 arms was to be either on the 9th (of the preceding dark half) or on the 6th (of the bright half of Aśvina). One may however being on the 1st tithi of Āśvina bright half and then *bodhana* will be on the 6th of the bright half.

If he begins on the *pratipad* the saṅkalpa will be as noted below. Then he should recite Rig Veda 16.11 — 'God Dravinodas specially desires your ladle filled (with offering); may you pour out (Soma) or fill (the vessel with Soma); the god then immediately comes down'. Then he should establish a *ghata* (a jar with a peculiar shape, the central portion bulging out, the neck narrow and the brim being broad and open), fill it with water, place twigs of mango and other sacred trees there-on and worship Durga with the 16 or 5 upacāras. Then he should offer materials such as sandal-wood paste, myrobalan for purifying the hair and also a comb. On the 2nd tithi he should offer a silken ribbon for keeping the hair in position, on the third *alaktaka* (red lac) dye for reddening the feet, vermilion for putting it on the head, a mirror for observing the face; on the 4th tithi he should offer *madhūparka* (to the goddess), a silver piece having the shape of a *talaka* (for the forehead) and collyrium as decoration fm the eyes; on the 5th tithi he should offer sandalwood paste, unguents and ornaments according to his means.

If he starts Durgā-pūjā-utsava from the 6th tithi either conjoint with Jyeṣṭha-nakṣatra or without it he should go in the morning near a *bilva* tree, should utter the saṅkalpa noted below, in repeat Rig Veda 16 11, establish a *ghata*, should worship the *bilva* tree as Durgā. If he has already started the utsava on *pratipad*, then he should go near a *bilva* tree in the evening conjoint with Jyeṣṭha or without it (and even if ṣaṣṭhi has expired before evening, then in the evening without ṣaṣṭhi) and rouse Devī with the mantra —

'for the destruction of Rāvana and in order to favor Rāma. Brahmā, O goddess, in former times roused you at an unusual time; therefore, I also awaken you in the evening of the 6th tithi of Aśvina.'

After thus awakening Devī he should invite the *bilva* tree With the words:—

“O bilva tree! born on the top of Srisaila and the abode of Lakṣmi, I have to take you; come, you are to be worshipped as Durga.”

Then he should, after taking each of the substances mentioned below and accompanying each With a mantra, place them on the bilva tree and make it an auspicious dwelling place for Durga. The substances for making a holy residence for Devī are the earth or clay, sandalwood paste, pebbles, coriander, durva grass, flowers, mite, curds, ghee, vermilion, conch-shell, collyrium, Moana (yellow pigment), mustard seeds, gold, silver, copper, whisk, mirror, lamp, *pañcapātra* (a broad-plate). Then he should repair to the *paṇḍal* erected for the pūjā perform *ācamanam*, should bind together with Aparajita creeper twigs or leaves of nine plants so as to form one bundle or sheaf, plantain, pomegranate, coriander, turmeric, Amm. Indicum, Arum colocacia, bilva, asoka and Jayantī. Each of these substances is accompanied by an appropriate separate mantra.

He should offer worship to the bundle of nine plants and to the image (of Durga) and invite the Devī to abide in the bilva tree with sandalwood (and other substances mentioned above). The rousing (*bodhana*) of the Devī and the invitation to the bilva tree are separate and are done with separate mantras (Tithi-tattva pp. 75-76). The two may be done at the same time if 6th tithi exists in the evening; but if it does not exist in the evening then *bodhana* may be done on the 6th and invitation on the 7th or *bodhana* may be done in the morning and invitation in the evening.



The clay image of Durgā together with the twig of bilva is to be entered in the house and Worshipped. The details of the complicated discussion are not set out here.

Then follow acts to be done on the 7th tithi on the 7th tithi conjoint with Mūla-nakṣatra or without it the performer after taking a bath approaches a bilva tree, worships it, folds his bands and says —

“O blessed bilva tree! you are always dear to Sankara; after taking from you a branch I shall perform Durgā worship; O Lord! you should not feel pain due to the cutting of a branch; O bilva ! prince among trees, salutation to you I’

After saying this he should cut off from the bilva tree a branch other than one in the or north-west and endowed with a couple of fruits (or without fruit) with the mantra noted below. Then he should take the branch, come to the place of worship (the maṇḍapa) and place it on a *pīṭha* (a seat). Then taking yellow

mustard seeds he throws them with two mantras and effects the driving away of goblins, evil spirits, *rākṣasas*, *Vināyakas* that cause obstacles takes up an offering of boiled rice and *māṣa* pulse and requests Kali who is surrounded by goblins to accept that *bali*, for protection against the evil spirits and prays her to confer upon himself all his objects in return for the offering of the *bali*. He then establishes the bundle of (the leaves and twigs) of nine plants tied together with *Aparājita* creeper and the *bilva* branch. He worships the latter with ‘salutation to the *bilva* branch’ and honors *Cāmuṇḍi* on the *bilva* branch and the clay image with the words 'this is *pādyā* (water for washing the feet), salutation in *Cāmuṇḍi* and addresses the *bilva* branch with the mantra quoted in n. 413 above. Then he utters the mantra:— 'O *Cāmuṇḍi*! move, move, make others move, enter my house quickly and go to the place of worship, *svāhā*', Then he establishes the *ghata*, worships the nine plants and five devatas, establishes the image on a seat and the bundle of nine plants to its right to the accompaniment of songs and instrumental music and places the *bilva* branch in a copper vessel near the image of *Devī* and performs the *prāṇa-pratistha* (vivifying or endowing with life) of the image of the *Devī* and of *Ganeśa* and other deities in the manner provided in the *Durgārcana-paddhatī* and *Tithitattva*.

Then he should, after taking in his hand husked rice-grains and flowers, contemplate upon the form of *Devī*. Then the *Durgārcana-paddhati* quotes a long but futiely worded passage from the *Matsya*, the corresponding passage from the *Kālīka-Purāna* may be briefly rendered as follows;

'*Devī* possesses a mass of hair, her head ornament is the crescent of the moon, she has three eyes, her face resembles a lotus and (full) moon, her complexion is like molten gold, she is well formed and has charming eyes, she is endowed with blooming youth, decked with all kinds of ornaments, has charming teeth, looks keen and has full and upraised breasts, her posture is such that she is bent at three places, she has crushed the demon *Mahīṣa*, she has ten arms long and soft like lotus stalks, she holds a trident in the right hand and a sword and discus below that (trident) in order, a sharp arrow and *sakti* (missile) in the group of her arms, a shield, a fully bent bow, a noose, a goad (held in order) from above and a bell and axe should be held in the left hand from below; under her one should show a headless buffalo from which rises a demon with a sword in his hand, who is pierced in the region of the heart by the trident (of *Devī*), who (demon) possesses teeth set awry, whose body is dyed red with blood, whose eyes are bloodshot and distended, who is encircled by a noose of snakes, whose face is rendered fearful. by his curved eyebrows, whose hair is held by *Durgā* with the left hand holding a noose, whose mouth emits blood; one should exhibit *Devī*'s lion; the right foot of *Devī* (should be shown) as resting evenly on the lion's back and her left foot toe (resting) a little higher on the demon.

Then the performer should put a flower on his head, take flowers and rice grains in his hand and make an invocation (*āvāhana*) with two mantras to *Durga* to be present in the *bilva* branch and establish her with the prayer to bestow long life. health and prosperity, He offers to the *Devī* the several *upacāras* of *āsana*, *pādyā*, *arghya*. &c. Then he should go near the sheaf of nine plants and repeat the mantra; "O blessed *Durgā*! come, enter into the (sheaf of) plants; this is your

place in the mortal world; I throw myself on your mercy!” So saying he should worship Devī in the *ghata* (jar) with ten or five upacāras or with flowers and sandalwood paste with separate mantras for each of the nine in the form ‘*Hrīm, om, kadalisthāyai brahmānyai namaḥ*’ and so on. Then he should worship Durgā with pādya and other upacāras and offer a kid or the like as an offering. The kid or he-buffalo should be dark and should be at least five years old.

Animal Sacrifice.

Much has been written about the sacrifice of animals in Durgā-pūjā. Only a few points can be dealt with here. The Kalikā-Purāna enumerates the following animals as fit for sacrifice in honor of Durgā and Bhairava; — birds, tortoises, crocodiles, fish, deer of nine kinds, buffalo, *gavaya* (Gayal), bull, goat, mongoose, boar, rhinoceros, black antelope, *sarabha* (a fabulous animal), lion, tiger, a human being and blood from one's own (i.e. the performer's) body; but the females of the species specified above were not to be offered as *bali* and the person who did so would go to hell. This was probably a concession to placate Devī who might have a soft corner for a *bali* of her own sex. The *bali* should have no defect and should not be one whose tail or ears were cut off. Though the above list of victims that may be offered is long, usually only goats and he-buffaloes are sacrificed. It is said that the Devī that resides on Vindhya is not so well pleased with the offerings of flowers, incense, and unguents and of other animals as she is pleased with offerings of rams and he-buffaloes. The Varṣa-kriya-kaumudī quotes:—

“One should never offer to the great Devī a horse or elephant; if a Brāhmaṇa offers a lion, a tiger or a human being (as *bali*) he would go to hell and even in this world he would have a short life and would be devoid of happiness and prosperity; if (a brāhmaṇa) offers his own blood, he would be guilty of suicide. If a brāhmaṇa offered wine he would lose his status as a brāhmaṇa. When wine is laid down as a necessary offering he should offer coconut water in a vessel of bell-metal or honey in a copper vessel.”

But there were texts that contradict this. For example, it is said in the Kālīka Purāna that a goat, he-buffalo, human being are declared to be *bali*, *mahā-bali* and *atibali*, respectively. It has to be remembered that though an animal is killed, still what is offered to the Devī is generally the blood and the head of the victim. The Kālīka Purāna says:—

“blood purified by the recitation of mantras over it and the head (of a victim) are said to be nectar; in the worship (of Devī) the adept worshipper should offer flesh rarely (if at all) except blood and the head (two) become nectar.”

The Kālīka Purāna further state; that *Sivā* (Durgā) partakes of the head as well as the flesh of the victim, that one should offer in pūjā the blood and head of the victim but the wise (devotee) should employ flesh in edibles and in *homa*. The Durgārcana-paddhati prescribes an elaborate ritual about killing the *bali* and offering its blood and head and the rites and mantra slightly differ according as

the *bali* is a goat, a buffalo or the performer's own blood The *bali* is made to face the east, the *sādhaka* (devotee) faces the north and repeats certain mantras one of which is Vāj. S. 23.17 —

“Agni was the animal to be sacrificed They sacrificed with him, he conquered this world (the earth) on which Agni exists; that will be your world, you will conquer that world, drink this water. Vāyu (wind God) was the animal &c ; the Sun was the animal &c.’

Another mantra is Manu V.39 (=Viṣṇu-dharma-sūtra. 51. 61=Kālika 71.39) viz.

“animals were created by Brahmā himself for serving the purpose of sacrifice, for the well-being of sacrifice and of all, therefore killing (animal) in a sacrifice is no killing (does not cause the sin or blame of ordinary killing).”

He should place on the head of the *bali* a flower with a mantra; then he sprinkles water with kuśa grass over the *bali* and then worships the sword with the mantra:—

“You are the tongue of Caṇḍika and you accomplish heaven (for the worshipper); Hrīm, Śrīm, O sword!”

The performer contemplates on the sword as described in Tithi-tattva and Durgārcana-paddhati honors it with sandalwood paste and the rest and repeats eight names of the sword bows to it, takes it with the words ‘Āṃ Hrīm Phaṭ’ and with one stroke (*jhaṭka*) cuts off head of the victim facing; the east (while the performer faces the north) or facing the north (while the performer faces the east). Then he collects blood in a vessel of clay or other material places it before the Devī and offers it; with the words:— “This is the blood of the goat; Om, O Jayantī” and says ‘Aim, Hrīm Śrīm O Kauśikī! May she be pleased by the blood.’ Then he offers the head of the *Bali* (goat or the like) placing on the head a lamp with a flaming wick. He then takes blood from the sword (with which the animal's neck was cut) and makes a *tilaka* mark with it on his forehead with two mantras It was supposed that the tilaka of blood would make all persons amenable to the person who had that blood mark on the forehead as the mantra quoted below expresses. When the *bali* is a buffalo, the mantras repeated over a goat are omitted and two others are substituted viz.

‘as you hate a horse and as you carry Caṇḍikā, so kill my enemies and bring happiness, O buffalo; you are the vehicle of Yama, you possess excellent form, you who are deathless; bestow on me long life, wealth, fame, a bow to you who are a buffalo.’

The fruit of offering buffalo's blood to Devī was deemed to be her gratification and favor for a hundred years. Then he performs japa of a mantra (quoted in note) and also certain verses of laudation and asks for certain benefits.

The Kalika Purāṇa in a long passage provides gradually rising periods of times for which Durgā becomes gratified by the offering of the blood of various animals. A few might be cited here:—

“Durgā secures satisfaction for one month by the (offering of the) blood of fishes

and tortoises, and for two months by (the blood of) crocodiles; by the blood of the black antelope and of the boar Devī is pleased for twelve years and by the blood of buffalo and rhinoceros for a hundred years; by the blood of the lion, the sarabha and from the performer's body Devī is gratified for a thousand years and by a human being as a *bali* for a thousand years."

There was a revulsion of feeling against blood sacrifices in some hearts and so even the Kālīka provides that the offerings of *kuṣmāṇḍa* (pumpkin-gourd) and sugarcane stalks, intoxicants and *āsavas* (spirits distilled from molasses, flowers or herbs) are like (animal) victims and gratification (to the Devī) is the same as by the offering of a goat.

But even in these days castes deemed higher, even including Brāhmaṇas, offer goats and rarely buffaloes to Durgā, if that is the custom of the caste or family. I understand that many families of learned Brahmins such as the Bhaṭṭācāryas of Bhatpara in West Bengal sacrifice fruits and vegetables in lieu of animals. The Ahalya-kamadhenu says that some Vaiṣṇavas regard the night when victims are killed as horrible and do not eat food or even drink water on that night and that among Brāhmaṇa castes the offering (*bali*) should be in the form of *kuṣmāṇḍa* and the like, or flour images of animals or simple ghee should be offered. As to other castes also it has been declared that *kuṣmāṇḍa*, bilva fruit, sugarcane stalks may be out into pieces.

The convenient belief from very ancient times has been that a victim offered in sacrifice to gods and pitrs went to heaven. Rig Veda 1:162 (= Vāj 5;23:16.) and Manu V.42 say so. Hemādri quotes verses saying that all the animals such as the buffalo that are employed for (gratifying) Devī go to heaven and those that kill them incur no sin.

Method of worship

The foregoing is somewhat of a digression, as the *bali* is generally to be sacrificed on the 9th and as the rites of even of the 8th have not yet been described on the Mahāstami conjoined to Pūrvāsādha-nakṣatra or without it, the devotee after taking a bath and Sipping water, should face the east or north, sit on a seat of *darbhas* perform purification of himself and the body which is made up of five element by repeating separately the *mystic* letters *yaṃ raṃ, laṃ, vaṃ'* in the manner set out in Durgārcana-paddhati, then he performs *prāṇāyāma*, and then *nyāsa* on the several parts of the body from the heart and head to the feet. He sprinkles over himself and the materials of worship water contained in a vessel of conch-shell and the like and over which he mutters eight times the mantra 'Hrīṃ Om Durgāyai namaḥ', he contemplates on Durga and places a flower on his head, mentally offers *upacāras* (to Devī), again contemplates on Devī's form and then offers the *upacāras* from *asana* (seat) to *pranāma* with appropriate brief mantras. Then he offers worship to several goddesses to the right side, front side and left side of Devī with brief mantras and to the Mātr̥s (64 are enumerated in Durgarcana) according to one's ability

with 5 *upacāras* or with sandalwood paste and flowers and to the 8 *māṭṛs* Brahmāni &c Then there is *aṅga-pūjā* (worship of Devī's limbs) from heart and head to the feet. Then worship is offered to her weapons such as trident, sword, discus, sharp arrow, shield, full strung bow, the noose, goad, bell; and then her lion-seat is honored and also armor, whisk, umbrella, flag and flag-staff, drum, conch. Separate mantras are recited in connection with the *pūjā* of each of these, as laid down in Durgarcanapaddhati, in the Nirṇayasindhu (which quote them from and other works.

Then he goes near the sheaf of nine plants and worships it with five *upacāras* or with sandalwood paste and flowers offered to each separately. Then he makes an offering of *māṣa* pulse and boiled rice.

On the day on which there is Mahāṣṭami *pūjā* the performer observes a fast But a householder who has a son should not observe a fast on the mahāṣṭami. He should follow one of the alternatives specified above (*naktam haviṣyānnam* &c). Whatever procedure about food he may follow, he keeping himself pure and observing the rules of conduct for *vrata*, should worship Devī; he should offer worship on the Mahāṣṭami and on 9th with *balis*; he should take leave (of Devī) on the 10th with Śrāvana-nakṣatra after performing the Sabara festival. When the last quarter of Śrāvana (nakṣatra) is running then he should give a send-off to Devī on the 10th tithi. The tithi-tattva positively asserts that a fast is to be observed on the same day on which Mahāṣṭami-*pūjā* is performed.

On this 8th tithi the performer has to honor maidens, feed them and Brāhmaṇas also. He may honor a maiden or maidens from the first to the 9th tithi, but he must do so at least on 8th. The Devī Purāṇa says — “Durgā is not so much gratified by *homa*, gifts and *japa* as she is gratified (becomes favorable) by honoring maidens.” And he has to give them *dakṣina* also. Hemādri quotes a long passage from the Skanda-Purāṇa on this subject. Skanda provides the performer should feed maidens from the first tithi Navarātra on a scale, viz. one maiden on the first tithi, two on the 2nd soon up to nine on the 9th. If he feeds nine virgins every day (of the Navarātra) he secures land; if he feeds double the number on each succeeding day he gets prosperity. He should not maiden who is one year old (or less), for such a girl has not developed at that age liking for fruits flowers and sandal; wood paste, Therefore he should honor maidens who are from two to ten years old, and not those that are beyond ten years. The Devī Purāṇa provides that if no virgin is available, one may honor even a married girl who has had no menstruation. The Skanda provides that maidens from two years to ten should be honoured under the following names respectively, viz. *Kumārika* (two years old), *Trimūrtī* (three years old), *Kalyānī*, *Rohinī*, *Kālī*, *Caṇḍikā*, *Śāmbhavī*, *Durgā*, *Subhadrā*. The Skanda provides special *pūjā* mantras for each of the nine kinds of maidens and different rewards are provided for honouring each of the nine classes. The general *āvāhana mantra* for all in the morning after the performer has taken a ceremonial bath with on is note

below. In this way he is to honor virgins with bodice, clothes, sandalwood paste flowers and *akṣatas* with different kinds of edibles and dishes and feed them with *payasa* (rice boned in milk: and Sugar). One should not honor a maiden that has a limb more or less, that suffers from leprosy or that has varicose veins or has a broken head or has limbs from which blood or pus oozes or has ulcers, that is blind from birth, is squint-eyed or blind of one or is ugly or has little hail: or too much hair or is diseased or is born of a slave woman. One should honor a brahmin maiden in all acts a kṣatriya maiden for victory, one belonging to untouchable castes in acts of terrible nature. After the maidens are fed, brahmins also should be fed (Durgārcana. pp. 681).

The Tithi-tattva and other works provide that in the Navarātra the performer should hear the recitation of the Vedas and that beginning with the first tithi up to the 9th he should himself recite Caṇḍī-pāṭha (recitation of Devī-mahātmya) or engage a person to do so, reciting it once on the first, twice on 2nd tithi and so on up to nine times on 9th tithi. The Devī Purāṇa provides for pūjā, japa and homa and the mantras therefore by saying that the worship of Devī is to be performed by casting into the fire sesame and with curds, milk and ghee. The Devī mantra is either what is called the Jayantī mantra, or the mantra of nine syllables. The Dvaitanirṇaya-siddhānta saṅgraha states that the mantra is either one that a man's guru has taught him, or the Vedic verse — '*Jātavedase sunavāma*' or one with nine letters or the one '*namo devyai mahādevyai*' or the slokas in the Saptasati.

The Tithitattva quotes a passage from the Varahā-tantra about the result of reciting Devī-mahātmya several times. A few verses are cited for sample;

When some great danger threatens, one should recite (Devī-mahātmya) seven times; if repeated twelve times one secures fulfillment of one's desires and the destruction of enmity; if repeated 14 times, an enemy would be subdued and a woman would be brought under one's control; repeating a hundred times in increase of one's kingdom. If repeated a thousand times Lakṣmi comes to a man of her own accord. As Aśvamedha is the prince among sacrifices as Hari (is superior) among gods the laud called Saptasati is the highest among all lauds.

The Tithi-tattva further provides that one should recite before the reading of the '*prathama-caritra*' the rishi (sage), the metre &c of it and also when repeating the *madhya-caritra* and the *Uttara-caritra*. Very great importance was attached in ancient and medieval times to the recitation of mantras and even modern men brought up in English schools, colleges and Universities often implicitly believe in their efficacy even if one may not understand their meaning. The qualities of the sounds of mantras or of parts of mantras (such as '*hrīm*') and their potentialities, the various Devīces employed when using them are deemed of far greater importance than the meaning. The Gita (X 25) itself puts *Japa-yajña* as the highest among yajñas such as those of *dravya* (materials or money), *tapo-yajña* (Gita. IV;28). Mantras are supposed to have a tremendous effect on the sub-conscious mind and it may perhaps be so if one concentrates one's mind

thereon to the exclusion of all else. A person could himself recite the Saptasati or engage a person to read it to him who was called *pāṭhaka* or *vācaka*. Some very orthodox writers went so far as to lay down that a Śūdra could only listen to the Mahābhārata or Saptasati but could not read it himself. Raghu-Nandāna like Kamalākara appears to have held this view. One should stop reading at the end of a chapter and not in its middle; but if for some reason one had to stop in the middle of a chapter, when one again commenced reading or reciting Saptasati, one should not proceed from where one left off in the middle of a chapter but begin with the first verse of the chapter half read or recited. Provision was made that the reader engaged for reading Saptasati should be handsomely requited for his labour by gifts of gold, silver, cows with bell-metal pails for milking. Mr. Ghosh notes that besides the reader of Devī-mahātmya a separate priest is selected to repeat the mula-mantra a hundred thousand times and is called *Jāpaka*. The Nirṇaya-sindhu gives elaborate descriptions of Śata-caṇḍī-pāṭha and Saharsa-caṇḍī-pāṭha. In the first, ten well-conducted Brahmans including the *ācārya* are chosen. They are to recite together Saptasati once on the 1st day twice on the 2nd, thrice on the 3rd and four times on the 4th; in this way Saptasati would be repeated one hundred times. In Saharsa-Caṇḍī one hundred Brāhmaṇas are to be chosen and they are to repeat Saptasati for four days as in Śata-Caṇḍī-pāṭha. A thousand Brāhmaṇas are to be fed and one hundred cows are to be donated. The Nirṇayasindhu notes that these two are not included in the great digests but there is popular usage to this effect.

After each pūjā prescribed for the day the family members their friends and guests sit together and partake of the *prasāda* (which in the houses of the well-to-do comprises select delicacies). Formerly, the persons sitting together would have sometimes numbered hundreds but in the days of rationing and control this would not happen.

After the pūjā homa is performed as indicated above; offerings are to be made in fire called '*Balada*' with the word '*svāha*' at the end to the accompaniment of a mantra preceded by "om". The Durgārcana-paddhati notes (p. 681) that after the special rites on the Mahāṣṭami described above (viz. pūjā, honouring maidens, Homa &c.) are finished the rest of the tithi should be spent by the devotee in dance, songs and music (*jāgara*). It appears that in the Devī and Kālīka Purāṇas it is provided that even on the 8th at midnight all animal such as a goat or he-buffalo should be sacrificed and that on the 9th tithi many *balis* were to be sacrificed. 'When the Sun is in the sign of Kanya (Virgin or Virgo) and in the month Īsa (Aśvina) one should offer pūjā on the 9th tithi of the bright half; one should observe a fast (on that tithi) and at midnight should begin pūjā of Devī with great expenditure and paraphernalia when the nakṣatra is Mūla or Purvāṣāḍha; an animal should be killed and a he-buffalo and a goat should be sacrificed'.

A short period of time, viz. the last *ghatika* of Mahāṣṭamī ‘and the first *ghatika* of navami, was called *sandhī*. During that period of two *ghatikas* a *pūjā* of Devī together with Yoginis is to be performed which is deemed to be the holiest *pūjā*. (p. 120) This *pūjā* is to be performed like the *pūjā* on Mahāṣṭami but the *bali* is to be offered at and after the Mahānavami begins and not during the last *ghatika* of Mahāṣṭami.

Now the rites of the Mahānavami have to be described. On the 9th tithi conjoined to Uttaraśāḍha nakṣatra or without it, 'pūjā is to be performed on the lines of the one of Mahāṣṭami. This day's *pūjā* is only a repetition of that on the 8th, the only difference being that a larger number of *balis* (goats etc.) may be sacrificed on it than on the 8th tithi a *bali* is to be offered as it is obligatory to do so on the 9th. Then the worshipper should perform homa, if able to do so. If he be unable to perform homa on both days, he should perform it on Mahāṣṭami. The offerings in the fire are to be 108. Lamps should be waved before the Devī (*nirājana*) from her head down to her feet Dakṣina (fee) to the priest for the whole of the autumnal *pūjā* is to be given on the 9th tithi and Raghunandāna expressly says that the Durgā-Bhakti-tarangini is wrong in saying that dakṣina is to be paid after taking leave (*visarjana*) of Devī. If no dakṣina be paid, the whole rite becomes fruitless. Then he should pray that all defects in the *pūjā* may be remedied, that whatever he has offered with a devout heart, whether leaves or flowers, fruits or water, whatever naivedya he has offered, may be graciously accepted by Devī and that if any mistake has occurred by his missing some letter or mantra Devī should forgive all that. He should wash the feet of a Brāhmaṇa maiden and give her sumptuous dinner and ask her to place with her hand on his head *akṣatas* and devoutly follow her a few steps. He should feed Brāhmaṇas It is the practice in many families to embrace each other and sing the praise of Durgā while drums are beaten. Then in a large procession they visit the houses of such relatives and neighbors as have performed the *pūjā*. Then the united procession visits other houses and the parties return the visits to each other by turns and wish happiness and good luck to each other and offer sweets.

On the 10th tithi after bathing and sipping water he should offer worship with sixteen upacāras or with as many as possible, should praise Devī with these words 'Om Durgām Śivam' &c. (on p 672 of Durgārcana-paddhati), should promote himself before her and make request to Devī with the mantra 'Mahīśaghnī Mahāmāye &c. I (ibid p. 672) and with the verse quoted below take a flower and cast it on the image with the words 'forgive'. Then after repeating two verses he should raise the image (of Devī), the bilva twig and the sheaf of nine plants from their places and keep them in another place and wave lamps made of flour before them he should go near the water of a river with dance, song, music, Vedic recitations and auspicious sports and pastimes and immerse the image in a tank or in a river after the prayer — "O Durgā, mother of the world, go to your place in order to come back after the lapse of a year."

Then he should perform the *Śābarotsava*. This last means that actions usually associated with the *Sabaras* (i.e. aboriginal tribes like the Bhils &c) should be indulged in (to express ecstasy of the Durgā Pūjā) on the 10th tithi after the immersion of the image of Devī. The Kāla-viveka quotes Satya to the effect that leave is taken of Devī on the last *pāda* of Śrāvana-nakṣatra in the day and Sabarotsava is celebrated on the 10th, and explains that what is meant is that like men of the Sabara tribe, people wear leaves of trees, their bodies are besmeared with mud, they make incoherent prancing movements and are engaged in dances, songs and music. The Kālika Purāna dwells on this at great length. It says:—

“the *'utsarjana* (sending away) of Devī should be made with festivals in the manner of sabaras, viz. people may make merry to their heart's content by throwing dust and mud, with auspicious sports and revelry, with indulgence in words and songs referring to male and female organs and with words expressive of the sexual act. The Devī becomes angry with him who does not abuse another and whom others do not abuse and pronounces on him a terrible curse.”

This provision that every one, how high-so-ever, was to join in the was probably made for emphasizing that before the Devī the highest and the lowest were of equal status and every one must join in the frolics on the 10th tithi to show that all men were equal at least one day in the year. After the immersion friends visit friends and partake of sweets. It appears that this last practice is now not in vogue.

A few words must be said with reference to certain relevant matters. In the Markandeya Purāna it is stated that Devī strode over the great demon's throat, struck him with her trident and with her heavy sword out off his head and made him fall down on the ground. But in modern times the image of Devī is placed in a structure of wicker-work and there are images of Lakṣmi and Gaṇeśa on the right side and at Sarasvatī and Kārtikeya on the left. Raghunandāna does not make much at these additional deities, though he speaks of the *prāṇa-pratistha* of Ganeśa and others. The image may be made of gold or silver, clay, metal, atone or there may only be a picture of Devī. For Durgā-pūjā it is not absolutely necessary that there should be an image. Devī may be worshipped in a *Liṅga* on an altar or in a book, in her *pādukas* (wooden or stone feet) in image, in a picture or a trident or sword or in water. Some of the Purāṇas like Garuḍa and Bhaviṣya state that on the 7th or 8th tithi nine wooden houses or only one with four corners may be constructed, that in the midst of it a platform or altar of four cubits in length and breadth should be made on which a throne of silk, woolen cloth and deer-skin should be prepared, whereon Durgā (image) made of gold, silver, clay or wood was to be made having four or ten arms, possessing a complexion like heated gold, three eyes and the moon as a head ornament.

There is no unanimity about the arms of Devī. The Varāha Purāna speaks of 20 arms of Devī and mentions the twenty weapons she carries. In the Devī-

bhāgavata she is said to have 18 arms Hemādri quotes verses in which Devī is said to have eight arms and ten arms respectively. Vidyāpati quotes passages for both ten arms and eight arms. It appears that different numbers of arms were associated with different forms and names of Devī for example, Vidyāpati in describing the form of Kali or Camuṇḍi speaks of her as having four arms. In the Virāta-parva (chap. 6) where Yudhisthira praises Durgā, she is described (in verse 8) as having four arms.

There are varying views about the word “*navarātra*.” Some hold that *navarātra* means 'nine days and nights'; it signifies only the time for a vrata (i.e. it is a Guṇa-vidhi), not the name of a rite (*karma*), while others contend that *navarātra* is the name of a rite or vrata, which may last for eight days (if there is *tithi-kṣaya*) or ten days (if there is *vṛddhi* of a tithi from the first tithi to the 9th). As the discussion is scholastic and hardly of any practical importance it is passed over here.

Then the question arises as to when pūjā is to be performed. Here there are varying views. The Ratnaya-mayūkha (p.14) quoting Devī-Purāna appears to hold that the pūjā should be in the morning, while the Nirṇaya-Sindhu holds that it should be at night. It appears from the Devī-Purāna and Kālika Purāṇa that pūjā should be in morning, mid-day and at night is intended. When the sun is in sign Virgo, the devotee should follow the method of *ayācita* or *nakta* or take food only once or subsist only on water beginning from the *nandikā* tithi of the bright half should bathe in the morning, should rise superior to the opposites (of heat and cold, happiness and pain &c.) and should worship (Śiva and) Śivā three times a day. The Kāla-tattva-viveka resolves this conflict by saying that morning and midday are brief, the principal and elaborate pūjā is at night only.

There is some confusion caused by laying down the nakṣatras, tithis or both on which the different items in the Durgā-pūjā were to be performed. The Kāla-viveka quotes Vyāsa as follows:—

‘One should awaken Devī on Ārdra nakṣatra, make her enter (the devotee's house) on mūla, and having worshipped her on Uttarāṣāḍha should take leave of her on Śrāvana’.

Most digests refer only to the tithis. For example, we saw above that on the 7th tithi the bilva branch is to be brought to the house, on the 8th fast, pūjā and *jāgara* are to be observed, the *bali* is offered on 9th, and on the 10th *nirājana* and discharging the Devī take place. Some texts combine the tithi and nakṣatra for the several parts of Durgā-pūjā. For example, the Rājamārtaṇḍa says:— ‘one should, after propitiating with faith (Devī) by the head, flesh and blood of several kinds of animals, take leave of her on Śrāvana-Nakṣatra and 10th tithi’. The Devī-Purāna provides:— 'The bilva tree should be addressed with a mantra on 6th tithi joined to Jyeṣṭha, (the sheaf of) plants should be brought into the house on the 7th joined to Mula, fast, pūjā and homa take place on the 8th joined to on the 9th joined to Uttarāṣāḍha one should worship Durgā with animal

sacrifices and after prostrating oneself before her leave should be taken of her on 10th tithi joined to Śrāvana.

It often happened that the tithi and nakṣatra provided for an item did not tally and some rules were evolved.

1. The first rule is: if both tithi and nakṣatra as provided tallied then that led to very good results, as said in the Liṅga Purāṇa even if there be no Mūla-nakṣatra, one should enter the bilva branch in the house on the seventh; the same rule applies to other tithis, but if the nakṣatras exist on the tithis specified there is increase of the results or rewards.'
2. The second rule was that *tithi* was superior and therefore even if the nakṣatra did not exist on the tithi specified, one should follow the tithi laid down for the several items in Durgā-pūjā. Devala and Lalla laid this down.

One question on which there is difference of view is about the tithi on which Navarātra is to be begun when pratipad is mixed with amāvāsya or dvitiya. Some digests quote passages from the Devī and other Purānas concerning the beginning of navarātra on pratipad mixed with amāvāsya. Devī is made to say:— 'In my worship *pratipad* which is joined to amāvāsya should not be accepted; pratipad existing only for a muhūrta (two ghatikas) at sunrise and then joined to the 2nd tithi should be accepted (for commencing Navarātra festival)'. On the other hand there are texts like the following:—

“If one were to accept for the (beginning of the) worship of Caṇḍika pratipad formed to part of 2nd *tithi* through ignorance or through another's advice, that leads to the death of that person's son.

On the first day of Navarātra one has to establish a *kalaśa* or *ghata*. A full *kalaśa* has been a symbol of holiness and prosperity from early Vedic times (compare Rig III. 32.15 ‘*āpurno asya kalaśaḥ*’). This is a rite which is performed in the Deccan, Gujarat and Saurāṣṭra even though the elaborate Durgā-pūjā of Bengal finds no place there. Ghata-sthāpana is spoken of in Durgārcana-paddhati (p. 663) and has to be performed by day and not at night. One should make an altar with holy clay and sow *yava* and wheat grains thereon with Rig. X. 97. 22, and establish a jar there of gold, silver, copper or clay with as. IX. 17. 4, fill the jar with water with Rig 75.5 (*imam me Gange &c.*), and cast in the jar sandal-wood paste, *sarvauśadhīḥ* dūrva grass, leaves of five trees (mango &c.), clay from seven places, fruit, five jewels and gold with appropriate mantras, surround it with a piece of cloth with Rig III.8. 4.; place a pūrṇa-patra (a cup filled with rice grains) on the jar and worship Varuna thereon contemplate on Durgā (as described in note 418) and invoke Durgā to come and be present in the jar along with all groups of gods and offer the *upacāras* from *padya* onwards, fold his hands, offer a prayer and boiled rice with māṣa pulse or a kuśmāṇḍa &c.

In the Deccan the main items in the Navarātra are the establishment of ghaṭa,

offering a garland of flowers on every tithi up to the 9th, a strict code of conduct (such as not shaving oneself) to be observed by the performer. If on the pratipad day on which the ghaṭa is to be established there is citra-nakṣatra and the astrological conjunction called Vaidhrti, it is to be done at the end of these but if these two exist the whole of the day, then the rite should be performed in the latter part of these two. In Bengal nine Jars are established in a figure (*sarvatobhadra*) filled with colored powders at prescribed places and these are decorated with nine differently colored flags. But in some parts of India only one ghat is established.

Hemādri quotes Devī-Purāna for honoring horses. The Durgā-pūja was meant for all Kings and such men as kept horses were advised to honor horses in Navarātra from the tithi in conjunction with Svāti-nakṣatra up to 9th tithi Kings were advised to perform Lohābhisārika rite²⁷ about horses from Aśvina śukla first to Mahānavami.

Why two Navarātras were recognized (in Caitra and Aśvina) is a matter of conjecture. It is possible that these two pūjās arose from the fact that spring crops and autumn crops became ready at these two times. The worship of Durgā was very much influenced by Sākta doctrines and practices.

Ghosh in his work on 'Durgā-pūjā' tries to establish that the Vedic idea of Dawn (Uṣas) spreading over the sky was changed by the Purānas and Tantras into the terrific goddess Durgā. I am not prepared to this explanation at all, as the links between the Vedic goddess Dawn and the terrible goddess of the Kālika-purāna are altogether wanting and as there is a gap of many centuries between the disappearance of Uṣas from the ancient pantheon and popular worship and the emergence of Durgā. There may be some astrological connection between Durgā (Virgo) riding a lion (Leo). But this also cannot be clearly made out.

In the Indian Historical Quarterly, Mr. N. G. Banerjee refers to the Durgotsava-paddhati of Udaya Simha which begins with the Mahānavami and a saṅkalpa for victory and ends with the description of horses marching on *daśami* to victory and avers that this work indicates that Durgā-pūjā was originally a military rite and was later on transformed into a religious festival He relies upon the description in the Raghuvamsa (IV. 24-25) how the advent of *Sarad* (autumn) season impelled Raghu to march on an invasion and to perform the *śānti* rite for horses called Aśva-nirājana and also on the Brhat-samhita chap. 44 (Kern's ed.) where occurs an elaborate description of the nirājana of horses, elephants and fighters on the 8th, 12th, or 15th of the bright half of Aśvina or Kārtika. There are serious objections against accepting this theory. It is not unknown that unconnected celebrations may be joined together on the same tithi or tithis. For example, in many parts of North India the Rama-lila festival for ten days is

²⁷ For Lohābhisārika or Nirājana rite, Vide H. of Dh. Vol. ill. p. 230 notes 309-311 and p. 910 note 1778.

associated with Navarātra days. But Navarātra and Rama-lila are independent of each other and in some parts even of North India, only one or the other is popular and celebrated and not both. There is nothing improbable in there being two occasions for nirājana one in Durgotsava and another on the occasion of a king's march on an invasion besides, a work of the 15th century can hardly be relied upon as evidence for explaining the origin of a festival that was in vogue for about a thousand years at least before that work. Moreover, if it was the usage to celebrate the marching on an invasion in Aśvina with nirājana (lustration) that rite might have been borrowed from that in Durgotsava by analogy instead of the utsava having adopted the military usage.

CHAPTER 9.

1. Vijaya-daśami

The 10th tithi of Aśvina-śukla is called Vijaya-daśami. As Daśami (10th tithi) is not mentioned in the *Yugma-vākya* the Nirṇaya-sindhu relies on a verse that in the bright half that tithi which exists at sunrise should be accepted for performance of rites and in the dark half the one that exists at sunset. Hemādri proposed two simple rules (when 10th is *viddhā*) then that tithi on which Śrāvana-nakṣatra exists should be accepted and in all other cases 10th mixed with 9th be accepted. But the other digests introduce many other considerations and complicated rules follow.

If the 10th tithi is mixed up with the 9th and 11th the day on which it is mixed with 9th should be accepted provided there is no Śrāvana nakṣatra on the next. The Skanda says:— Aparājītā-Devī should be worshipped on the 10th towards the north-east and in the afternoon when the 10th is mixed with 9th. Aparājītā should be worshipped on that day for welfare and victory. Another verse is ‘A person should offer worship on the 10th tithi in Aśvina bright half and should not perform the worship of Aparājītā on Ekādaśī. It must be remembered that the proper time for Vijaya-daśami rites is *aparahna* (afternoon) and *pradoṣa* is *gaunakāla* (secondary time). If 10th extends over *aparahna* on two days, the first (i.e. 10th mixed with 9th) should be accepted. If the 10th exhibits at *pradoṣa* time (but not at *aparahna*) on two days, then the later (viz. 10th mixed with 11th) should be accepted; Śrāvana is not decisive just as Rohini in Janmaṣṭami is not. If on both days the tenth tithi does not exist at the time of *aparahna* then the first (10th mixed with 9th) is to be accepted; but in this case if on the 2nd day Śrāvana-nakṣatra exists at the time of *aparahna* then the latter (10th mixed with 11th) is to be accepted.

Hemādri and following him Nirṇaya-sindhu (p. 189) quote Kaśyapa to the following effect: ‘if daśamī exists for some time at sunrise and if there is then Ekādaśī for the rest of that day and there is Śrāvana-nakṣatra at *aparahna* on that day, that tithi is called Vijayā; since Rāma started on his invasion (against Rāvana) on Śrāvana-nakṣatra, people should celebrate the crossing of the limits of their village on that day and nakṣatra.

The Nirṇaya-sindhu and other works quote a verse —‘That time (on 10th tithi in Aśvina) which is slightly later than evening twilight and when the stars have just begun to appear is to be known as Vijayā and tends to the success of all undertakings.’ Bhrgu says:— ‘the 11th muhūrta (on a day of 15 muhūrtas) is called Vijayā all desirous of victory should march out at that time: These verses explain why this tithi is called Vijayā-daśami These two verses show that the time called Vijayā is of two kinds.

The Vijayā-daśami is one of the three most auspicious days in the year (the other two being Caitra-Śukla 1st tithi and Kirtika-Śukla 1st). Therefore in India children begin to learn the alphabet on this day (i.e. perform Sarasvati pūjana) people start new undertakings on this day, even when the moon and the like are not astrologically favorable and if the marches against his foes on this tithi when their is Śrāvana-nakṣatra it is very auspicious and brings to him victory and peace.

On this the principal acts are; the worship of Aparājitā the worship of Sami, *Sīmollaṅghana* (crossing the boundary of one's village), returning home and having a lamp waved before oneself by the women in the house, wearing new clothes and ornaments and in the case of a king, *nirājana* of the horses elephants, soldiers and marching out.

Daśami or Vijaya-daśami is a great day for people of all castes, but it is specially a day for the kṣatriyas, the nobles and kings.

The procedure of the worship of Aparājitā (invincible) Devī is briefly as follows in the afternoon one should go to the north-east of one's village, smear the earth (with cow dung) on a pure spot, should draw with sandalwood paste or the like a figure with eight segments, should make a *saṅkalpa* and should invoke Aparājitā in the midst of that figure with the words 'salutations to Aparājitā' and also invoke Jayā and Vijayā to the right and left of Aparājitā respectively with the words 'salutation to Kriyā-śaktī' and 'salutation to Umā' respectively. He should then offer worship with sixteen upacāras to Aparājitā, Jayā and Vijayā with the mantras '*Aparājitāyai namaḥ, Jayāyai namaḥ, Vijayāyai namaḥ.*' and offer the prayer: 'O Devī accepting this pūjā which I have offered to you according to my ability, for my protection may you go to your own place'. In the case of the king he should pray for victory in the words 'May Aparājitā wearing a striking necklace and resplendent golden girdle and fond of doing good bestow victory on me' and then he should take leave of her in the words 'O Devī I &c'. Then all people should go out of the village to Sami (Mimosa Suma.) tree growing in the north-east, offer worship to it People may perform the crossing of the boundary of the village before or after the worship of Sami. Some provide that the images of Rāma and Sītā should be worshipped on Vijaya-daśami, since Rāma conquered Lanka on this day.

In the case of the king the procedure described by Hemādri is as follows:— the king coming out of his palace should be preceded by his *purohita* and after performing the rites on starting for a journey should march towards the east; after reaching the end of the capital he should perform Vāstupūja (worship of a site) and worship the guardians of the quarters and the devatas (in temples) he may meet on the road. He should then offer worship to Sami tree with Pauranika mantra — 'I take refuge with the blessed and auspicious Sami tree, that removes all inauspicious things and evil acts and the effects of bad dreams'; then he (the

king) should take first towards the east and towards other directions the Viṣṇu steps. After making an effigy of his enemy or merely bringing him before his mind he (the king) should pierce him in the heart with an arrow with a golden shaft. The purohita recites verses about the victory of the king in the quarters; the king should honor worthy Brahmins, the astrologer and purohita and should arrange sports of elephants, horses and foot-soldiers. He should then enter his palace to the accompaniment of auspicious shouts like 'Jaya' and lights should be waved before him by courtesans. The king who performs every year this auspicious ceremony secures long life, health, prosperity and victory; he suffers from no ailments physical or mental nor defeat and obtains unblemished wealth and victory in the world. If a king starts on an invasion without celebrating Vijaya-daśami he would secure no victory for a year in his kingdom. The Tithi-tattva quotes Rajamārtāṇḍa to the effect that if for any reason the king cannot march out in person on Vijaya-daśami should send out his umbrella or favorite weapon for a victorious march.

The Nirṇaya-sindhu, Dharma-sindhu and other late works and some verses about Sami and other details in 'Sami destroys sin. Sami has reddish thorns, it held (concealed the arrows of Arjuna and it appealed lovingly to Rāma. O Sami worshipped by Rāma! May you remove obstacles on the march that am to undertake according to my convenience and ease'. If a Sami tree is not available, then the *amiantus* tree should be worshipped with a mantra (given in note below). Taking up a little wet clay from the root of the Sami tree together with *akṣatas* one should bring it to one's house to the accompaniment of songs and loud instrumental music then the person should wear new apparel and ornaments along with his relatives and lights should be waved before him as an auspicious rite by chaste young women.

In modern times on Vijaya-daśami there is sami-pūjā in many parts of India. But Sami is a rare tree in Maharashtra and Konkana, twigs of a tree called Apti are brought from the forest and arranged in the form of a bush near a temple and in the afternoon, the people of a town or village engage in a sort of mook scramble for taking away twigs of Apti and distribute the leaves among their neighbors, friends and relatives saying 'take this gold', In Saurashtra and in several other places there is no such distribution of leaves. The Dharma-sindhu notes that common people (in Mahāraṣṭra) out of twigs of Sami and take them to their houses but that this has no śāstra basis in some places a he-buffalo or a goat was formerly sacrificed on this day in the former princely States of India such as Baroda and Mysore *darbars* were held on Vijaya-daśami (or Dasara, as it is called) and grand processions with richly caparisoned elephants and prancing horses were taken out on the streets of the capital. Kālidāsa mentions that when *śarad* came Raghu performed the śānti rite called *vāji-nirājana* (Raghuvamśa IV. 24-25). In his Brhat samhita (chap. 44: ed by Kern) Varāha describes at length lustration rites for horses, elephants and men. The Nirṇayasindhu sets out

the mantras at the time of nirājana of the army —

“O goddess, ruling over gods! may my army divided into four sections (elephants, chariots, horsemen and foot-soldiers) attain to the position of having no enemy left in this world and may victory come to me everywhere through your favor.”

The Tithi-tattva provides that the king after performing nirājana for vigor to his army should see the fine *khanjarīta* bird in the vicinity of water or cow-pens and address it with the mantra. 'O *khanjarīta* bird I you have come to the earth, you have a blue and auspicious neck and you bestow all desires! salutation to you! The Tithitattva then (p.103) descants upon the conclusions about the future to be drawn from the several places where the *khanjarīta* (wagtail) is seen and from the directions in which it is seen. In Manu V. 14 and Yaj 1:174: among the birds whose flesh is forbidden for eating is *khanjarita* (probably because it was such a valuable bird for prognostications).

In some parts of Northern India Rāmāyana celebrations go on for ten days and culminate on the 10th of Aśvina in the burning of a tall hollow paper and wicker-work structure concealing crackers representing Rāvana and his hosts.

There are several other local customs and usages such a worship of weapons of war and implements of one's trade or avocation associated with Dasara or Vijaya-daśami which are passed over here for reasons of space.

There are many conjectures about the origin of the Dasarā festival. Some relying on the usages of some parts of India to offer to the gods ears of new corn, of hanging on the doors of the house the ears of green or unripe paddy and of putting in the turban young sprouts of wheat and the like, hold that it is more or less an agricultural festival others hold that as, about *dasarā* monsoon rains stop, swollen rivers abate and crops are near being garnered, it is the most suitable time for marching on an expedition and that therefore the origin is due to military exigencies.

Two logs of wood (*aranis*) from an Aśvattha tree growing inside a Sami were employed in producing fire by attrition for Vedic sacrifices. Fire symbolizes vigor and valour and logs of Sami are helpful in producing fire and Sami wood is very hard. In the Atharva Veda (VII:11:1) we have the words 'the Aśvattha tree rides Sami'. The Tai. Br 12.1 16 refers to Agni being produced from Aśvattha that is 'Samī-garbha' and Tai. Br. 12 1.7 connects Sami with Śānti (the removal of adverse signs). In the Tai. Br. (VI 9.2.) we read — 'O Sami remove from us (destroy) sins and enmities' (*śamī samayāsmad-aghā dveśāmsi*). It had some affinity with Navarātra also, as the latter celebrates the military exploit of one against Mahīśāsura and was therefore celebrated immediately after Navarātra. The word 'Dasarā' is derived from 'daśa' meaning 10 and 'ahan' (a day)

2. Divāli

This festival of lights illuminations and fireworks is the most joyful of all Hindu festivals and is most generally observed throughout India. Observances, however, differ in detail and number from age to age and from province to province. It is not a single festival in honor of a single god or goddess like the Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī or the Navarātra is. It is spread over four or five days and contains several independent items. The days of Dīpāvali properly so called are three. It is called *Dīpavali* (row of lamps) in many works, but also *Dīpālikā*. When emphasis is laid only on one item in this festival of several days it is also designated *Sukharātri* in Rājamārtāṇḍa and in Kālaviveka. *Yaksarātri* in Vatsyana's Kāma Sūtra, *Sukhasuptikā* (in Vrataparakāśa and Hemādri on Vrata).

The Bhavisyottara contains a charming verse with a double entendre —

‘May this auspicious day of lights remove your sins like Rāmāyana in which the thunder of clouds is stopped (or in which Meghanāda i.e. Indrajit, son of Ravana is described as killed), in which the tips of wicks are burning (or in which became infuriated) and in which young women find delight (or with which Rāma is pleased).’

Some works like the N.S. and Kāla-tattva-vivecana hold that the three days viz. 14th amāvāsyā and Kārtika first, constitute the Kaumudī festival.

Taken an in all Dīpāvali spreads over about five days. The whole festival comprises five principal items spread over five days, viz. worship of wealth, the celebration of Viṣṇu's victory over Narakāsura, worship of Lakṣmi, victory of Viṣṇu over Bali and dice-play and the exchange of brotherly and sisterly affection.

There are illuminations and the discharge of crackers on almost all the five days from the 13th of the dark half of Aśvina. This last is called in Gujarat and Saurāṣṭra *Dhana-teras*. Before and on this day houses are painted and decorated, courtyards of houses are cleaned, and metal vessels are polished and illuminations begin. The Padma-purāṇa refers to illuminations on the 13th of the dark half of Kārtika (by the Pūrnimānta reckoning). Skanda quoted by Nirnayāmṛta provides for lighting lamps at the advent of night on Kartika dark 13th outside the house in honor of Yama in order to avoid accidental.

Naraka-caturdaśī

On the 14th of the dark half of Aśvina (or of Kārtika in the purnimānta reckoning) persons afraid of Hell should take an oil bath at the time of daybreak, should whirl over their heads the twigs of Apāmārga tree together with clods of ploughed land and the thorns (of the twigs). Then the Purāna provides for *tarpana* (satiation with libations of water mixed with sesame) to Yama and mentions seven names of Yama. Then the purāna provides that a lamp should be lit for Naraka (i.e. for the avoidance of Naraka) and that in the evening illumination with charming lamps should be provided in the temples of Brahma,

Viṣṇu, Śiva and others. In *maṭhas* (monasteries), in rooms for implements, on *caityas* (mounds on which sacred trees grow), in assembly halls, on rivers, and ramparts, in parks, wells, principal roads and in the women's apartments, in shrines of siddhas, arhats (Jains saints), Buddha, Camuṇḍā, Bhairava, in isolated stables for horses and elephants (verses 15-17) Other texts provide that on this day in the midst of the bath one should whirl over one's body twigs and leaves of apamārga or of gourd or of *prapunnāta*, (called Tikli in Marathi) for the removal of hell and that one should light a lamp with four wicks in memory of Narakāsura. It was believed that Lakṣmi came to dwell in oil and the Ganges came to all waters on the 14th in Dīpāvali and he who would take an oil bath on this morning would not see the world of Yama.

In modern times, people in the Deccan after their bath on 14th crush under their foot a bitter fruit called Kārīt, which probably represents Narakāsura. The oil bath was to be taken about the time of *arunodaya*, but if for some reason it could not be done then it may be taken even after sunrise. The Dharma-sindhu says that even *yatis* (ascetics) should undergo the oil bath on this day. It appears probable that originally the 14th was called *Naraka-caturdasi* because Yama was to be propitiated for fear of Hell. Later on the legend about the killing by Kṛṣṇa of Narakāsura, king of Pragjyotisa city (Kāmarupa), said to have been born of the Earth when it came in contact with the Varāha incarnation of Viṣṇu was pressed into service.

People nowadays remember only Narakāsura on this day and hardly any one performs Yama tarpana. The depredations of Narakāsura are narrated in the Viṣṇu Purāna V.29 and in the Bhāgavata X. (uttarardha) chap. 59. He deprived Aditi the mother of gods, of her ear ornaments, Varuna of his umbrella, Mandara of a peak: called Maniparvata and kidnapped 16100 girls of gods, siddhas and kings and imprisoned them in his palace. Kṛṣṇa killed him and prompted by great pity, he raised the status of these unfortunate women by marrying them all.

Several works such as the Varṣakriya-kaumudi and the Dharma-sindhu prescribe that on the evenings of the 14th of the dark half and amāvāsyā of Aśvina men with firebrands in their hands should show the way to their pitrs (deceased ancestors) with the mantra —

'May those men in my family who were cremated and those who had no cremation performed for them and those that were burnt only by resplendent fire (without religious rites?), reach the highest state (or goal); may those (pitrs) who leaving the world of Yama came for the Mahālaya Śrāddhas (in the dark half of Bhādrapada or Aśvina acc to pūrnimānta reckoning) find their way by the brilliant light (of the firebrands) and reach (their own worlds).

The medieval texts prescribe on 14th of Aśvina dark half the performance of the following acts viz. oil bath, tarpana of Yama, lighting lamp for Naraka, illuminations at night holding firebrands worship of Śiva, worship of Mahārātrī, taking food at night only.

Out of these only three (viz. oil bath, lighting a lamp for Naraka and night illumination) are now-a-days generally performed and the rest are omitted. After the bath people put on new clothes and ornaments and take a repast of sweets and the like and in the noon there is a sumptuous feast.

On all the three days, viz. 14th of dark half of Aśvina, amāvāsyā, and the first of Kārtika-Śukla an oil bath in the morning is prescribed for him who desires wealth and prosperity.

Aśvina amāvāsyā

Aśvina amāvāsyā is a very important day. One should take an oil bath in the morning and perform the worship of Lakṣmi for the removal of *alaksmi* (bad luck, penury). Some texts and that the barks of five trees should be balled in water for the bath and the person should have lights waved before him by women. The Bhavisyottara describes the celebrations on amāvāsyā at some length. Briefly it comes to this — in the morning one should take (an oil) bath, worship gods and pitrs and perform the pārvana srāddha with curds, milk, ghee and feed brāhmanas with various edibles. Then in the afternoon the king should proclaim in his capital 'today is the sovereignty of Bali; O people! enjoy yourselves'. People also in their houses should make merry with dance and music, should offer tāmbūla to each other and anoint their bodies with saffron powder, dress themselves in silken robes and wear gold and jewels, young women move about in groups wearing brilliant clothes, the houses should be full of rows of lamps, handsome maidens should cast rice grains about and the waving of lamps (nirājana) should be resorted to which confers victory. Towards midnight the king should move about in the capital on foot to see the fun and charm of the festival and then return to his palace. When midnight is past and people's eyes are heavy with approaching sleep, the women in the city should create great noise by beating winnowing baskets and drums and should drive out *alaksmi* (bad luck) from the courtyards of their houses.

Hemādri quotes from Bhaviṣya certain additional items:— 'no one except children or ailing persons should take a meal by day, one should worship Lakṣmi in the evening and should illuminate with tree-like rows of lights shrines of gods, squares where four roads meet cemeteries, rivers mountains, houses, bottoms of trees, cow-pens, caves. They should decorate shops where merchandise is bought and sold with white cloth and flowers, then feed Brahmanas and hungry persons in places surrounded by lamps and take dinner dressed in white garments and decked with ornaments.

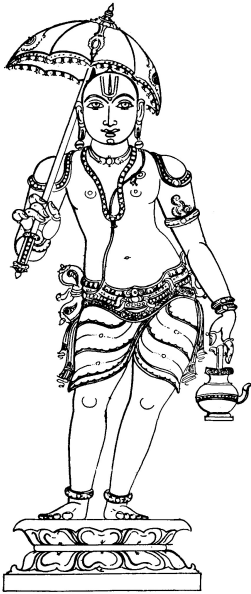
In Bengal Kali is worshipped on this day who it is said is both Lakṣmi and Sarasvati in modern times this is a day specially for merchants and traders. On this day they worship their account-books, invite friends, customers and other traders and give them *tāmbūla*: and some sweets. Old accounts are closed and new ones opened.

There is a popular legend that Brahmā gave to Brahmans *rakṣa-bandha* (Śrāvana Full Moon day) as their festival, *Daśarā* to ksatriyas, *Divali* to traders and *Holika* to Sūdras.

The night of the worship of Lakṣmi is called *Sukharātri*, since Lakṣmi gives up her sleep on the *amāvāsya* when the sun is in Libra (or Balance) and it is provided in some works that at the dawn of Sukharātri when the house is illuminated by lamps one should honor one's relatives with words of complimentary queries and worship Lakṣmi, that removes the taint of ill-luck, with auspicious flowers, sandalwood paste, curds, yellow pigment and fruits.

The Kṛtya-tattva quotes a verse — when there is 14th tithi in a portion of the day and there is amāvāsya on the night of that day Lakṣmi should be worshipped and (that night) should be known as Sukharātri to and then gives an elaborate procedure of the worship of Lakṣmi. Some works such as the Varṣa-Kṛtya-kaumudi, Kṛtya-tattva (p 452) and Dharmasindhu (p 101) provides that on this Sukharātri not only Lakṣmi but also Kubera is to be worshipped.

Bali-pratipada (Anna-kūṭa)



The first of Kārtika-śukla is regarded as one of the three most auspicious days of the year. The Dharmasindhu remarks that though the three days from the 14th tithi are designated Dipāvalī yet that day which has Svāti-nakṣatra is most commended. It may be stated that Bali-pratipadā is often conjoined to Svāti-nakṣatra. On this day also an oil bath is obligatory. The most important item on this tithi is the worship of Bali.

The Bhaviṣyottara describes this worship of Bali as follows:— The king should at night draw the figure of Bali having two arms on a circle made on the ground with five colored powders; the image should have all ornaments and should have Vindhya Bali (Bali's queen) near him, should be surrounded by asuras like

Kūsmāṇḍa, Bana, Mura and others should wear a crown and ear ornaments; the king should himself offer worship in the midst of his palace together with his brothers and ministers with several kinds of lotuses and offer sandalwood paste, incense and naivedya of food including wine and meat and employ the following mantra — “salutation to you, O king Bali, son of Virocana, enemy of gods and the future Indra, accept this worship.” Having thus worshipped he should keep awake at night by arranging for dramatic spectacles presented by actors based on stories about ksatriyas. Ordinary people also should establish inside their houses on a couch the image of king Bali made with white rice grains and worship it with flowers and fruits. Whatever gifts, large or small, are made on this day became inexhaustible and bring delight to Viṣṇu. The Kṛtyatattva provides that

three añjalis of flowers should be offered to Bali. The Bhavisyottara ands 'this tithi increases the dominion of Bali; baths and gifts made on this tithi in Kārtika yield a hundredfold reward.'

If the is mixed with amavāsya or dvtīya, the worship of Bali, the proper time of which is night, should be performed on pratipad mixed with amāvāsya, since Hemādri quotes from Padma 'Śiva-rātri and Bali's day should be observed on the day when the tithi is mixed with the preceding tithi and on account of the *yugma-vākya*. Madhava also is of the same opinion.

Bali was the son of Virocana and grandson of Prahlāda, a great devotee of Viṣṇu. In the Vana Parva (28:2) Bali asked his grandfather Prahlāda the question — 'which is better, *ksamā* (forbearance) or *tejas*' (vigorous action) in the Śāntiparva 225:13 it is said that Bali felt jealous of brāhmanas. The story of Bali who had become very powerful and made gods lose their *tejas* is narrated in Brahma-Purāṇa, 73, Kurma 1:17, Vāmana chap. 77 and 92, Matsya chap 245-246 and Bhavisyottara 140. Bali began an Aśvamedha, Viṣṇu assumed the form of a dwarf brāhmana student and begged for land that would be measured by his three steps. Though warned by Sukra that the dwarf was really Viṣṇu. Bali promised to give land equal to three steps. Then the dwarf grew larger and larger and covered heaven and earth in two steps. When Vāmana asked Bali where to plant the third step Bali told him to plant it on his head and then Bali was thrust into the nether regions. Viṣṇu being pleased with Bali's adherence to his plighted word conferred on Bali the overlordship of pātāla and the position of the future Indra. This story is an ancient one. The Mahābhāṣya on Panini in III:I.26 states that when a person recites the story of Bali's imprisonment (in pātāla by Viṣṇu) or represents it on the stage people use such phraseology as '*Balim bandhayati*' (he binds Bali). Bali was imprisoned a long time ago. This makes it certain that the story was embodied in dramas and poems more than two thousand years ago.

The *Bali pratipada* appears to be called *Vīra-pratipadā* in the Vāmana-Purāṇa. It is also called *Dyūta-pratipad* (Kṛtya-tattva. p.452). The Purāṇas say that on that day Śiva was defeated in dice-play by Parvati, that Śiva became sad, while Gauri remained happy. Therefore, on this day in the morning people should resort to gambling. Whoever succeeded on this day in gambling would find that the whole year thereafter was beneficial to him but if he suffered defeat in gambling that day he would lose his wealth that year. In Ellora cave No. 21 Śiva and Pārvatī are shown as playing with dice. In many parts of India people engage on this day in gambling and fortunes are often lost or made on this day. Even in a comparatively small country like Nepal gambling stakes soared up to three million rupees in 1955 on the Bali-pratipad day.

On this day also there should be illuminations. It is said 'by lighting lamps during (the day of) Bali's domination Lakṣmi becomes stable; this is called

Dipāvali because there is waving of lights in this festival. Having reached (the day of) Bali's domination how will lamps be burning in the houses of those who do not observe the festival of the rows of lamps? '

The Dharma-sindhu furnishes a long list of the observances on this pratipad day according to the several Purānas and digests, viz. worship of Bali, Illuminations, holiday for and worship of cows and bulls, worship of Govardhana, the tying of Mārgapāli (lit protectress of the road), wearing new clothes, dice-play, waving of lights before men by women (whose husbands are alive), and tying up an auspicious garland. In modern times only three out of these, viz. worship of Bali, illuminations and gambling are observed and the rest are hardly observed anywhere. Therefore only brief references will be made to the rest. Cows, calves and bulls are to be worshipped and decorated and cows are not to be milked and bulls are not to be made to carry burdens this day. This is to be done in the morning of Kārtika pratipad.

If it be mixed up with the 2nd it should not be done on that day as that would lead to the death of one's sons, wife and loss of wealth, but this should be observed when pratipad is mixed with Amavāsya. Devala prescribes this and remarks that by the worship of cows — three prosper, viz. people, cows and the king. As regards Govardhana-pūjā, those who are in the vicinity of Govardhana (a hill near Mathura) should go to it and worship in the morning, while others not near it should make a Govardhana Hill with cow dung or with heaps of cooked food or draw it in a picture and worship it along with Gopāla (Kṛṣṇa) and offer all the 16 upacāras to Govardhana and Gopāla (Kṛṣṇa) with mantras which pointedly refer to Kṛṣṇa's giving protection to the settlement of cowherds (Gokula) against the heavy down pour of rain to the discomfiture of Indra. The naivedya is to be on a grand scale.

Therefore, the Smṛti-kaustubha (p.174) states that Govardhana pūjā is called *Annakūta* (heap or hill of food) in purāna. The Dharmasindhu provides that a homa should be performed with the two verses — 'ā gāvo agman' (Rig. VI. 28. 1) and 'praite vadantu' (R.V. X. 94. 1).

In the afternoon of the pratipad (Kārtika-Śukla) the tying of Mārgapāli takes places. A rope of kuśas or kāśas (*Saccharum spontaneum*) should be made according to the usage of one's family and tied to a tall pole and a tree in the east; one should bow to it and offer a prayer to it and all including the king and brāhmanas accompanied by cows, elephants and the like should pass by the way underneath the rope. In the same way a strong rope of kāśas or the like should be made and a tug of war should ensue the rope being frequently pulled on one side by the warriors and on the other by persons of lower castes. The pulling of the rope should be done in front of a temple or the palace or where four roads meet and an equal number of strong men should be selected for each side. A line should be drawn behind each side. If the persons of lower castes succeed in

drawing the other side towards them then it should be held that the king will be victorious there after for one year. The *Nirājana* ceremony by women should be performed in the morning (if the pratipad is mixed with dvitīya) and the Mangala-mālikā (a series of auspicious rite or auspicious garlands) should be performed in the evening on the 2nd tithi (If pratipad exists only for short time and is followed by dvitīya).

As shown above the three days from Aśvina-Kṛṣṇa 14th are spoken of as days of Kaumudī mahotsava. The Bhavisyottara and Padma derive the word *Kaumudī* from 'ku'(earth) and the root 'mud' to be delighted, the meaning being — 'in which people find delight on the earth among themselves' and then another etymology is suggested, viz. *kumudas* (white water lilies) are offered to Bali in this festival.

In the Vedic period and for centuries thereafter certain rites were performed in the month of Aśvina or in autumn such as the Aśvayujī and Āgrayana or Navasaśyesti. The first is one of the seven pākayajñas mentioned by Gautama-dharma-sūtra (VIII:19). The first was performed on the full moon day of Aśvina. But it is not possible to trace the Divāli festival to these rites.

Yama-dvitīya (bhaiya-duja)

On the 2nd of the bright half of Kārtika occurs a very fine festival called Bhrātr-dvitīyā or Yama-dvitīyā. The Bhaviṣya states:—

'On the 2nd tithi of Kārtika bright half Yama was treated by Yamuna to a dinner in her house; therefore this tithi became declared in the world as Yama-dvitīyā wise men should not take mid-day meal in their own houses but they should take food from the hands of the sister through affection, as doing so increases one's welfare or prosperity. Gifts should be made to sisters; all sisters should be honoured with golden ornaments, clothes, reception and meals; but if there be no sister, one should honor a woman whom he regards as sister (uncle's or aunt's daughter or a friend's sister).'

The digests and further details. One should do worship to Yama and Yamuni and to Citragupta, and brothers and sisters should offer *arghya* (water in token of respectful reception) to Yama. The procedure is briefly this — In the morning the sister should invite the brother, make him take at mid-day a bath with scented water and unguents rubbed on his body; she along with the brother should worship Yama and Yamuni with *arghya* and offer handfuls of flowers. The *arghya* mantra is —

Ehi mārtaṇḍa pāśa-hasta yamāntakā loka dharāmareśa |

Bhrātr-dvitīyā kṛta deva-pūjā grhāṇa cārghya bhagavan namaste ||

“Come come O Yama, son of the Sun; you carry in your hand a noose; accept this worship offered on Bhrātr-dvitīyā and also *arghya*; salutation to you!”

Then two more mantras may be addressed.

Dharma-rāja Namaste'stu Namaste yamunāgraja |
Pāhi mām kiṅkaraiḥ sārdham sūrya-putra namo'stu te ||
Yamasvasur namaste'stu yamune loka-pūjite |
Varadā bhava me nitya sūrya putrī namo'stu te ||

"O Dharmarāja, to you, the elder brother of Yamuna; O son of the Sun, protect me along with your servants; salutation to you salutation to you, O Yamuna sister of Yama and honoured by people always confer on me favours, O daughter of the Sun salutation to you"



After this she serves food to her brother with the verse — “O Brother! I was born after you; partake of this pure food for pleasing Yama, particularly Yamuna.” If the sister be older than the brother she should say ‘I was born before you ’ Then after the brother finishes his meal she should deck him with sandalwood paste and then herself partake of the food. Some works like the Vratarāja (pp. 78-91) present a far more elaborate procedure, which is passed over here but two matters provided for by it may be mentioned. The first is that a person before going to his sister's house should mutter ten names of Yama.²⁸

The second is that the sister is to worship images of Yama and of eight mythological personages (Markandeya, Bali and others) supposed to be immortal for the increase of her brother's life. In modern times hardly any religious ceremony is performed except that residents of places near or on the banks of the Yamuna river (Jumna) bathe in the Jumna and there is a *mela* on the river on this day. The only thing generally done is the brother's visiting his sister, dining at her house, light being waved before him and his making some presents to the sister.

This festival of Bhrātṛ-dvitiyā is really an independent one but it was probably tacked on to the three festive days of Divāli in order to lengthen out the days of fun and joy. Sisters, when after their marriage they leave their brother's home, may not meet for years and further the sister may have become rich and the brother a poor man or *vice versa*. Our ancient writers evinced a keen appreciation of the bonds of disinterested affection between brothers and sisters and set apart a day in the year for their meeting to enable them to go over their sweet memories of childhood and to re-live for a day at least their early life which had gone forever. A religious tinge was added to the festival by recalling

²⁸ yamo nihantā pitṛ dharma-rājo vaivasvato daṇḍa-dharaśca kāla | bhūtādhipo data-kṛtānusārī kṛtānta etad daśa nāmbhir japet ||

the two mythical personalities of Yama and Yami, that figure in the famous Yama-Yami hymn (Rig. X. 10).

I should like to digress a little and strongly protest against the conclusion drawn by certain Western Sanskrit scholars that the hymn is an indication of the prevalence of the usage of the marriage of a brother and a sister among ancient Aryans. The hymn is a purely imaginative effort 'which bodies forth the forms of things unknown', as in the case of Rig. X. 119 where the poet imagines what Indra must have felt when treated to huge portions of Soma beverage. In Rig. X. 10.10 the sage makes it clear that in future ages something like what was delineated in his fantasy might occur (namely, sisters might do unsisterly acts). Macdonell in his 'Vedic Mythology' (pp. 172, 173) indulges in some facile assumptions. Yama may be an Indo-Iranian divinity, but Yami does not occur in the Avesta at all, as he himself admits, but only in later Parsi writings. Therefore, what is stated in these later writings should not be foisted upon the sages of the Rig-Veda. He supposes that the sage in Rig X. 10 indulges in propaganda for exonerating Yama from incest. Propaganda is well-known to Western countries in the 19th and 20th centuries A.D. The Rig-Veda nowhere states that the human race was produced from Yama and Yami. There is no warrant for saying that Yami is Indo-Iranian and consequently the myth of the human race being born from a brother and sister is not Indo-Iranian. Pargiter in AIHT (p. 70) follows the ball set rolling by Macdonell and others and boldly asserts that, when the Vāyu (in 93.12) says that Nahuṣa had six sons born of *pitr-kanyā*, Virajā, the word *pitr-kanyā* means 'sister' and Nahuṣa married his 'sister or half sister' and that union between brother and sister was not unknown as Rig Veda X.10 about Yama and Yami shows. One suspects the motives of a writer like Pargiter who held high judicial office in India when he does not explain why '*pitr-kanyā*' was used and not '*svasr*' when he pays no heed to the fact that in many places in Vāyu (72. 5. 73.1-2, 26, 36, 40, 45, 77, 74) Menā, Acchodā, Pivarī, Gauḥ, Yaśodā, Virajā herself Narmadā and Gandhakālī are spoken of as "*pitrnām mānasī kanyā*" that Vayu (72), Matsya (13. 2-9) and other Purānas speak of seven groups of pitrs and set out how from the mind-born daughters of pitrs several scions were born. Virajā (described as *pitrkanyā* in Vāyu 93 12 which Pargiter naively renders as 'father's daughter' i.e. sister) is spoken of in the same Purāna (Vāyu 73. 45) as the 'mind-born daughter' of these (i.e. of Pitrs) in the plural and not as 'of the father'. Writers like Pargiter sometimes create more riddles by their so-called research than they can be said to have solved.

The Padma asserts that those who please their married sisters with presents of clothes and the like are not subject to any quarrel for year, nor to danger from enemies. Both Bhavisyottara and Padma state:—

“He who eats a meal prepared by his sister's hand on the day on which King Yama was served in this world a meal by Yamunā through affection secures wealth and

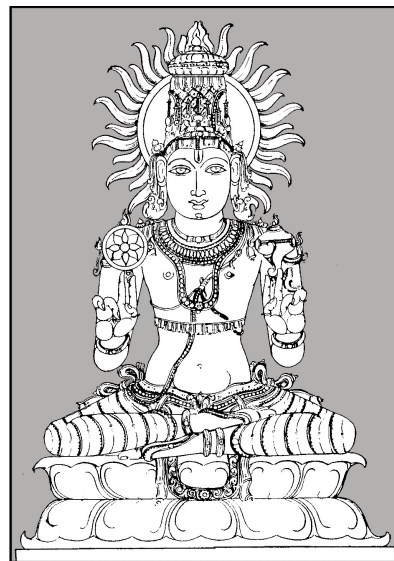
the best of foods.”

In Vedic times and in early Smṛtis like those of Manu (2:11) and Yāj. (1:53) it was difficult for brotherless maiden to get married. But from this it is a far cry to say that the Bhrāṭṛ-dvītīyā owes its origin to this idea or practice.

CHAPTER 10

1. Makara-Saṅkrānti.

It generally falls on the 13th or the 14th of January in the month of Pausa. Saṅkrānti means 'the (apparent) passage of the sun from one Rāśi (sign of the Zodiac) to the next following' and hence the Rāśi in which the Sun enters is designated as the *Saṅkrānti* of that name. When the Sun leaves the Rāśi called Dhanus (Sagittarius) and enters the Makara (Capricorn) in that is called *Makara Saṅkrānti*. There are only twelve Saṅkrāntis even if there be an intercalary month in some year. Everyone of the twelve Saṅkrāntis was regarded as a holy day.



The Matsya-purana (chap 98) deals with the completion of Saṅkrānti-vrata. Briefly, it provides that on the day previous a person should take food only once in the noon and on the Saṅkrānti day should brush the teeth and then take a bath with water mixed with sesame. The person should offer to a self-restrained Brāhmana householder three vessels containing edibles together with a cow intending them to be for Yama, Rudra and Dharma and repeat four verses one of which is as follows:—

“As I do not make any difference between Śiva, Viṣṇu, the Sun and Brahmā, may Sankara (Śiva) who pervades the Universe be always a bestower of welfare on me!”

The person should make, if able, further gifts of ornaments, a bedstead and golden jars (two) to the brāhmana: but if poor, should offer only fruits to the brāhmana. Then he should take his meal but without oil and should feed others according to his ability. Women also should perform this vrata. Great merit was attached to a bath in the Ganges on a Saṅkrānti, on an eclipse and on New and Full moon, as such a person reached the world of Brahmā. A bath with ordinary water (not heated) was obligatory (*nitya*) on every Saṅkrānti, since the Devī Purāna declared: —

“One who would not take a bath on holy day of Saṅkrānti would be for seven lives diseased and poor; whatever offerings are made to gods and pitrs by people on Saṅkrānti are returned to them by the Sun again in several future lives.”

It may be stated that in ancient texts the entrance of the Sun alone in a Rāśi is not regarded as holy time, but the enhance of all planets in a nakṣatra or Rāśi was deemed to be a holy time. Hemādri (on Kāla p. 4:37) and the Kālanirṇaya quote three verses specifying the holy times (*Puṇyakāla*) of the passage of the

Sun and planets as follows:— in the case of the Sun the puṇya-kāla is 16 ghatikas before and after the moment of the Saṅkrānti; for the moon it is one ghati and thirteen *palas* on both sides, for Mars four ghatikas and one pala, for Mercury three ghatikas and 14 *palas*, for Jupiter 4 ghatikas and 37 *palas*, for Venus four ghatikas and one pala, for Saturn 82 ghatikas and 7 *palas*.

Though the planets also have Saṅkrāntis, later writers hold that the word *saṅkrānti*, by itself means only Ravi-Saṅkrānti, as stated by the Smṛti-kaustubha.

The twelve Saṅkrāntis in the year are grouped into four classes, viz. there are two *ayana saṅkrānti* (that is Makara-Saṅkrānti from which *Uttarāyana* starts and Karkata Saṅkrānti from which *Daksināyana* starts), two *Visuva* Saṅkrāntis (that is, Meṣa and Tula Saṅkrāntis when the day and night are equal in length), the four Saṅkrānti called *Sadasīti* or *Ṣadasīti* (i.e. Mithuna, Kanyā, Dhanus and Mina) and *Viṣṇupadī* or *Viṣṇupada* (that is, Vrsabha, Simha, Vriścika and Kumbha).

Saṅkrānti gradually came to be deified and the Devā-purāna identified it with Durgā herself. The Devī Purana says:—

‘Devī is all-pervading on account of the division into very small and large parts in the form of year, *ayana*, season, month day and the like. Devī bestows rewards in accordance with the divisions into meritorious and sinful (actions). Even one act done at that time (of Saṅkrānti) yields results multiplied thousands of times. From *dharma* (righteous acts) increase life, kingdom, progeny, happiness and the like from *adharmā* (unrighteous conduct) spring diseases, sorrows and the like; whatever is donated and whatever japa is performed near (i.e. at the time of) *Visuva*. (Meṣa and Tula) Saṅkrāntis and at the *ayana* (Makara and Karkata Saṅkrāntis) becomes inexhaustible the same beholds good about *Viṣṇupada* and *Sadasīti-mukha*.

The exact moment of time when the Sun leaves one Rāśi and enters the next following is impossible at being marked by human vision. Therefore thirty ghatikas before and after the moment of Saṅkrānti are said to be the time.

It is not possible to perform on such an infinitesimally small point of time the rites prescribed for performance on Saṅkrānti, one has to accept periods of time near this moment as the proper time. The first rule is that the nearer the ghatikas are to the time of actual entrance the holier they are. Therefore it is laid down that in *saṅkrānti* the *puṇyatama-kāla* (holiest time) is sevenfold viz. three, four, five, seven, eight, nine or twelve ghatikas; during those periods real merit is accumulated. If one cannot perform the prescribed rites within these limits thirty ghatikas are permitted as the highest limit in the texts for the *puṇyakāla* (holy time) for all Saṅkrāntis except *Sadasīti* (in which the maximum puṇyakāla is 60

ghatikas) and *Viṣṇupadi* (where it is 16 ghatikas before and after).²⁹

Each of these twelve Saṅkrāntis in the year is seven-fold (i.e. has seven different names) according as it occurs on a particular week day or in conjunction with certain classes of nakṣatras. The seven names are: *Mandā*, *Mandākinī*, *Dhvānkṣī*, *Ghorā*, *Mahodarī*, *Rākṣasī* and *Miśritā*. A Saṅkrānti (such as Meṣa or Karka or Makara) is called *Ghorā* if it occurs on Sunday, *Dhvānkṣī* on Monday, *Mahodarī* on Tuesday, *Mandākinī* on Wednesday, *Mandā* on Thursday *Miśritā* on Friday and *Rākṣasī* on Saturday. Again, a *saṅkrānti* (like Meṣa or Karka and so on) is called respectively *Mandā*, *Mandākinī*, *Dhvānkṣī*, *Ghorā*, *Mahodarī*, *Rākṣasī* and *Miśritā* according as it commences respectively on nakṣatras called *dhruva*, *mrdu*, *ksipra*, *ugra*, *cara*, *krūra*, *miśrita*. It is laid down that *Mandā saṅkrānti* is beneficial to Brahmaṇas, *Mandākinī* to kṣatriyas, *Dhvānkṣī* to Vaiśyas, *Ghorā* to Śūdras, *Mahodari* to thieves. *Rākṣasī* brings success to sellers of liquor and *Miśrita* increases the (profit of the) avocations of Caṇḍalas, Pukkasa of those whose business is of a terrible nature and of all craftsman.

There is some conflict on the question of the general rule about the extant of *puṇya-kāla* on a Saṅkrānti. Śātātapa, Jābāla and Marīci prescribe the sixteen ghatikas before and after the moment of Saṅkrānti as the *puṇyakāla* for the performance of the religious acts prescribed on Saṅkrānti. On the other hand, Devī-Purana and Vasistha lay down 15 Ghatikas each before and after Saṅkrānti as the *puṇyakāla*. This conflict is removed in various ways. One is to hold that the Devī Purana is not restrictive but what it means is only this that lesser limits are meant to indicate that greater merit results by their observance. Another explanation was to hold that the limit of 16 ghatikas applied to Saṅkrānti called *Viṣṇupadi*.

A Saṅkrānti may take place by day or at night. If Saṅkrānti occurs by day that whole day is *puṇya-kāla*. If Saṅkrānti occurs by night, lengthy and complicated discussions occur in Hemādri, Madhava and others. One rule evolved is that in ten Saṅkrāntis excluding Makara and Karkata Saṅkrāntis the *puṇya-kāla* is by day when those Saṅkrāntis occur by night.

Several exceptions are engrafted on the general rule about 15 or 16 ghatikas before and after a Saṅkrānti being the *puṇya-kāla*. Therefore, several works like the *Tithi-tattva* (PP.144-14:5) and *Dharma-sindhu* (pp 2-3) give brief final conclusions on this topic. I summarize the conclusions of the latter work.

Saṅkrānti

Puṇya-kāla

Meṣa and Tula	15 ghatikas before and after
Vṛṣabha, Siṃha, Vṛṣcika, Kumbha	16 ghatikas before
Mithuna, Kanya, Dhanus, Mina	16 ghatikas after
Karkata	30 ghatikas after

²⁹ Nowadays with computer calculations the exact moment of the Saṅkrānti can easily be ascertained, yet still the rules apply.

If Saṅkrānti occurs by day when a period of two ghatikas or less only remains before the close of the day then in the case of Mithuna, Kanyā, Dhanus, Mina and also Makara Saṅkrānti Puṇya-kāla is before Saṅkrānti for the ghatikas specified above against each; if Saṅkrānti occurs in the morning at a period of two ghatikas or less from sunrise then in Vrsabha, Simha, Vriscika, Kumbha and also Karkata Saṅkrānti, Puṇya-kāla is after Saṅkrānti for the period specified above. If Saṅkrānti occurs at night but before midnight, Puṇya-kāla is latter: half of the daytime before the Saṅkrānti; if Saṅkrānti occurs at midnight or later than midnight but in the night Puṇya-kāla is on two days viz the latter half of the daytime before Saṅkrānti and the first half of the day after Saṅkrānti ; this applies to all Saṅkrānti except Makara and Karkata. When Uttarāyana begins in Makara in the night Puṇya-kāla is the day after Saṅkrānti and if Saṅkrānti begins in Karkata at night Puṇya-kāla is the day prior; if Makara Saṅkrānti occurs at evening twilight (i.e. during three ghatikas after sunset) then Puṇya-kāla is on the previous day; if Karka Saṅkrānti occurs in morning twilight (i.e. during three gh. before sunrise) then Puṇya-kāla is on the day following the Saṅkrānti .

This discussion about the *puṇyakāla* is necessary because a bath is to be taken and gifts are to be made during that time in order to secure the full merit thereof. The general rule that a bath is not to be taken and a gift is not to be made at night. Parāśara says — ‘a bath by day purified by the rays of the Sun is commended; bathing at night is not recommended except on seeing an eclipse. The Viṣṇudharma-sūtra says the same, but several exceptions were recognized.

The Bhaviṣya Purana provides:— one should not take a bath at night and particularly should not make a gift at night but a bath and a gift may be made at night on proper occasions. A gift at night is commended in an eclipse, marriage, Saṅkrānti, pilgrimage, on death, on the birth of a child and at (before sitting down for) hearing *itihāsa* (Mabābhārata.)'

Gobhila provides — ‘people may bathe and make gifts at night in eclipses, Saṅkrāntis, marriage, in distress (or death) and on the birth of a child and in vratas undertaken for a desired object.

A bath is therefore obligatory on every Saṅkrānti and particularly in Makara Saṅkrānti. There are special recommendations about gifts in Hemādri on Kāla which are taken by him from Viśvamitra and which are borrowed by Nirṇayasindhu, Samayamayūkha and others and which are as follows; gift of ram on Meṣa, of cows on Vrsabha, of clothes food and drinks on Mithuna, of ghrta-dhenu on Karkata, of a conveyance with some gold on Simha, of clothes and cows on Kanyā, of different kinds of grains and seeds on Tulā, on Vrścika of clothes and houses, on Dhanus of clothes and conveyances, on Makara of wood and fire, on Kumbha of cows water and grass, on Mina of fresh flowers.

Special gifts are required to be made on Makara Saṅkrānti.

The Skanda says 'He who donates *tila-dhenu* on Uttarāyana (i.e. Makara-saṅkrānti) secures all objects and obtains the highest happiness.' The Viṣṇu-dharmottara provides —

'the gift of garments on Uttarāyana yields great reward (merit) A man becomes free from diseases by donating sesame and a draught bull.'

The Śiva-rahasya declares that Śiva after he performed the Gosava sacrifice created sesame on Makara Saṅkrānti for the gratification of all people and provides —

'one should bathe in water in which sesame are mixed and one should rub one's body with sesame; *tarpana* of gods and pitrs should be made with water in which sesame has been put; sesame should be given to Brāhmaṇas on Uttarāyana Saṅkrānti; one should eat sesame and perform *homa* with them.; those who perform homa with sesame and honour brāhmaṇas shine in the heaven (as stars) like those who donate a thousand cows; auspicious lamps fed with oil of sesame should be lighted in Śiva temples and a Brāhmaṇa should worship God (Śiva) with grains of rice and sesame.'

The Kalika-Purāṇa provides:—

'one should place on the top of (the Liṅga emblem of) God Śiva the five jewels viz. gold, diamond sapphire, ruby and pearl; if a one has none of these one may place in Uttarāyana on the top of the Liṅga gold one karṣa or half karṣa in weight; he should worship with plenty of ghee prepared from cow's milk and should donate ghee and a blanket after washing and pressing it; he should give condiments and a dinner to brāhmaṇas and ascetics and honor them with dakṣiṇā.

The importance of *tila* (sesame) is brought out in the following:— A person who uses sesame in six ways does not sink: (is not unsuccessful or unlucky) i.e. Who rubs his body with sesame, who bathes with sesame, who is pure and always offers water mixed with sesame (to his deceased ancestors), and who offers sesame into fire, who makes a gift of sesame and who eats sesame.

Gifts are made in these days on Makara Saṅkrānti but mostly by women. They honor priests by donating vessels (of clay, copper or brass) containing several things such as betel-nuts and coins and also invite their women friends and distribute among them earthen vessels containing red powder, pieces of turmeric, betel nut and also separately several other things such as sugarcane stalks.

In south India there is a festival called *Pongal* which corresponds with the *Makara Saṅkrānti* observed in Northern and Western India, Pongal being the first day of the Tamil year. This South Indian festival lasts for three days.

According to the modern astronomical calculations, the winter solstice occurs on 21st December and on that day commences the Sun's apparent march towards the north. But in India people who follow the almanacs based on the ancient methods and data think that the Sun's march towards the North takes place on the 14th of January. They are thus about twenty three days behind the correct

Makara Saṅkrānti owing to the precession of the equinoxes. This fact was recognized even in the medieval Dharma-śāstra works for example, Hemādri says that twelve days before the (popular) day of a Saṅkrānti, the real *punya-kāla* occurs and therefore gifts and the like prescribed on the occasion of *saṅkrānti* should also be performed on the day twelve days prior to the popular Saṅkrānti day.

The origin of the observances of Makara Saṅkrānti cannot be very ancient. The Sun's apparent northward march for six months has been mentioned in Brāhmaṇa and Upaniṣad texts at least a thousand years before Christ. For example, the Satapatha Brahmaṇa states:— 'That half moon which increases represents the gods and that which decreases represents the fathers. The day represents the gods and the night represents the fathers.

And further, the forenoon represents the gods and the afternoon the fathers. 'Now when he (the Sun) moves northwards then he is among the gods, then he guards the gods; and when he moves southwards then he is among the fathers, then he guards the fathers.' The Chāndogya-Upaniṣad contains a reference to the Sun's passage to the north during six months in the words 'from light to day, from day to the bright half of the month, from the bright half of the month to the six months during which the Sun goes towards the north, from the months to the year, from the year to the Sun &c.' But here the word *udag-ayana* is not expressly employed. The word '*ayana*' occurs in the Rigveda 3:33.7 (*āyannāpo ayanam icchamānāḥ*) 'the waters seeking a passage went rushing.' Here '*ayana*' has the etymological sense of 'passage' or 'place' But in the Grihya-Sūtras the word '*udaga-ayana*' in the sense of the sun's northward passage occurs. The Aśvalāyana Grhya sūtra prescribes the auspicious times for certain domestic rites as follows:— 'In the northward passage of the Sun, in the bright half of a month and on an auspicious nakṣatra, *caula* (child's tonsure), *upanayana*, *godana* and marriage may be celebrated; according to some teachers a marriage may be celebrated at all times (not necessarily in northward passage of the sun &c.)'. But here no rāśi name appears.

In Jaimini VI. 8. 23 It is provided that rites for gods are to be performed in the northward passage of the Sun, some day in the bright half of the month and on an auspicious day. As a matter of fact, none of the ancient Srauta, Grhya or Dharma Sūtras mentions any rāśis or prescribes any auspicious or inauspicious times concerned with rāśis but only times in relation to nakṣatras. Some people try to interpret the words '*susthe indau*' (when the moon is well placed i.e. auspicious) in Yāj. I 80 as referring to rāśis but they forget or ignore the fact that the earliest extant commentator of Yajñavalkya, Viśvarūpa, explains those words as referring to nakṣatras and not to rāśis. The subject about the introduction of rāśis will be briefly discussed in the next section on Kāla and Muhūrta. As *udagayana* had already been regarded for many centuries as an auspicious period, naturally Makara Saṅkrānti from which the northward

passage of the Sun starts became a very sacred day, when the rāśi system was introduced.

Why so much importance was attached to sesame on this Makara Saṅkrānti day it is difficult to say Probably in view of the cold prevailing at the time of the beginning of uttarāyana an oily substance like sesame easily available and of great food value was selected. In any case the observances and festival of Makara Saṅkrānti do not appear to be much older than the beginning of the Christian era

In modern pañcāngas, Makara Saṅkrānti, being deemed to be a deity, several curious matters are added viz. Saṅkrānti rides on some *vāhana* (principal vehicle or draught animal such as an elephant) and an *upa-vāhana* (as ancillary vehicle), she wears a garment either dark, white or red or of some other colour, she is supposed to carry a weapon (such as a bow or Javelin), she applies a *tilaka* or some substance (like *lac*, *gorocana*), she is either young, middle-aged or old, her posture (sitting, standing &c.) is mentioned, the flower she holds, the food she eats, the ornament she wears these are mentioned, her two names (out of the seven mentioned above based on the week day and the nakṣatra on which Saṅkrānti takes place) are specified, she is supposed to come from one direction (east or the like), to proceed to another (such as the west &c.) and to cast a glance at a third direction; then her physical form is described such as drooping lips, long nose, with nine arms (or the like) And the prognostications are as follows: whatever things Saṅkrānti accepts, their prices rise or they are destroyed and whatever she glances at is ruined; happy are the people in the direction from which she comes and unhappy are those in the direction she goes.

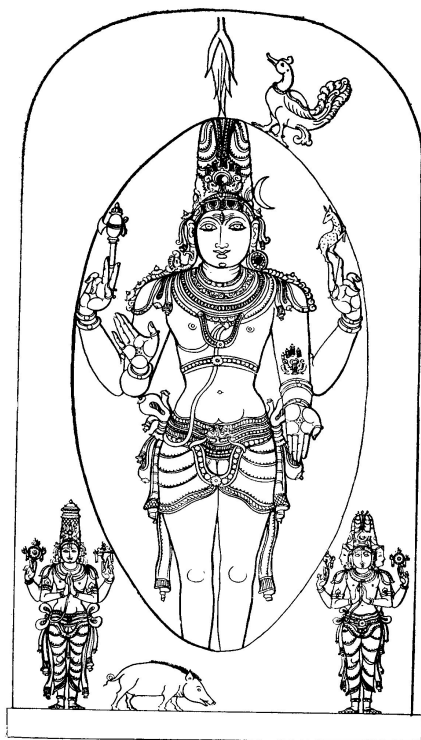
2. Mahā Śiva-rātri-vrata

The 14th tithi of the dark half of a month is called Śiva-rātri, but the 14th of the dark half in Magha (or in Phālguna according to the pūrṇimānta reckoning) is the Śiva-rātrī *par excellence* and is often designated Mahā-Śiva-rātri.

The Garuḍa Purāna I. 124, Skanda 11. 33, Padma VI Agni 193 contain the Mahātmya of the Śiva-rātri on the 14th of the dark half of Māgha. Though some details differ, in all these the main outlines are the same.

All these praise Śiva-rātri-vrata highly, When after observing a fast on that day Śiva is worshipped with *bilva* leaves and *jāgara* for the whole night is observed, Śiva saves one from hell and bestows enjoyment of happiness and moksa and one becomes like Śiva himself. Gifts, sacrifices, austerities, pilgrimages and observances of vratas are not equal to even one ten-millionth part of Śiva-rātri.

The story that illustrates this extremely exaggerated praise of Śiva-rātri in the Garuḍa-Purāṇa seems to be the older of the three and therefore it is briefly set



out here. There was a king of *niṣādas* named Sundarassenaka on Mount Abu who went out to a forest for hunting with his dog. He bagged no animal and being oppressed by hunger and thirst he remained awake the whole night on the bank of a river in a bilva trees. Underneath the bilva tree there was a Śiva-Liṅga and in an effort to keep his body at ease he threw down leaves of the bilva tree which fell on the top of the Liṅga without his knowing it in order to put down dust he (took water from the tank and) splashed it so that it fell on the Liṅga and one of his arrows fell down from his hands on the Liṅga through inadvertence which he retrieved from the Liṅga by falling on his knees before the Liṅga. In this way he unconsciously bathed the Liṅga touched it worshipped it (with bilva leaves) and kept awake the whole night.

In the morning he came back to his house and partook of food given by his wife. When he died in course of time he was seized by the myrmidons of Yama when Śiva's attendants fought with them and liberated him and he became a sinless attendant of Śiva together with his dog in this way he collected merit without knowing it; if a person does with full knowledge (what the *niṣāda* did without knowing) the merit is inexhaustible.

The story in the Skanda is more elaborate. There it is a wicked *kirāta* named Caṇḍa who killed fish by catching them in his nets and killed also many animals and birds. He had a wife who matched him in his cruelty. Thus passed many years. One day he ascended a bilva tree taking water in a quiver desirous of killing a wild boar and passed the whole night without sleep keeping a watch and cast down many bilva leaves which fell on a Liṅga at the bottom of the bilva tree. He also rinsed his mouth with water from the quiver, that fell on the Liṅga. In this way he worshipped Śiva in all ways, viz. he bathed (*snapana*) the Liṅga with water, he worshipped Liṅga with numberless bilva leaves and he awake the whole night and was without food that day. He alighted from the tree and began after reaching the tank to catch fish. Because he did not return home that night his wife went without food and water and passed that high anxiety. In the morning she came to that forest with some food for her husband and seeing her husband on the other side cross of the river, she placed the food on the river bank and began to cross the river. They both bathed in the river, but before the *kirāta* could reach the food a dog came there and ate all the food. When the wife wanted to kill the dog the *kirāta* whose heart was softened persuaded his wife to desist from killing the dog. By that time it was noon (on *amāvāsyā*) and Śiva's

attendants came there to take both the husband and wife as he had worshipped (though unknowingly) the Liṅga and as both had fasted on 14th. The kirāta and his wife reached Śiva-loka.

There is a conflict of views about what the chief thing is in Śiva-rātri-vrata. The Tithi-tattva holds that a fast is the principal thing in Śiva-rātri and relies on the words of Sankara.

‘On that tithi (Śiva-rātri) I am not so pleased with bath (of the Liṅga) nor with clothes (offered to the Liṅga) nor with incense nor by worship nor with the offering of flowers as I am pleased by a fast’.

On the other hand, Hemādri and Mādhava hold that Śiva-rātri means fast, *pūjā* and *jāgarana* and all the three are apprehended as principal and quote passages from the Skanda Purana and Nāgarakhaṇḍa in support.

‘That person who observes a fast on Śiva-rātri for twelve years and who keeps awake (in dance and music) before me the whole night would reach heaven. That persons, who worships Śiva and performs jāgara on the 14th would not thereafter taste milk at mother's breast (i.e. would not be born again); the nisāda unknowingly worshipping a Liṅga, observing a fast and jāgara, becomes free from sin and attained the position of the attendant of Śiva’.

In the Kālanirṇaya there is a lengthy discussion on the question whether the word 'Śiva-rātri' is used in a conventional sense (viz. a particular tithi) or in an etymological sense (*every* night on which some observance relating to Śiva is performed) or a metaphorical sense (viz. a vrata, though the word expresses a *tithi*) or a *yogarūḍha* sense i.e. etymological *cum* conventional like the word *pañkaja* (a lotus) The conclusion established is that the word Śiva-rātri is *yogarūḍha* like the word *pañkaja* (lotus), which does spring from mud (so far the sense is etymological) but which is confined to only one thing viz. lotus (so far there is *rūḍhi* or convention) and does not apply to a frog.

Śiva-rātri-vrata is both *nitya* (obligatory) and *kāmya* (optional). It is *nitya* because there are passages which lay down that sin is incurred if one does not perform it — “the person that does not worship with devotion Rudra who is the lord of three worlds wanders through thousands of future lives.” Besides there are verses which lay down that the vrata should be performed every year:— “O great goddess! A person should every year worship Mahadeva with devotion on Śiva-rātri.” This vrata is optional because the texts provide the rewards of performing this vrata. For example, vide p 85 above and p. 86 above for the maxim of *samyoga-prthaktva*.

This vrata according to the Īṣāna-samhitā can be performed by all human beings:— ‘The Śiva-rātri-vrata destroys all sins and confers enjoyment of happiness and moksa (final liberation) on all human beings including caṇḍālas.

The Īṣāna-samhitā provides: a devotee of Viṣṇu or Śiva or of another god, if he gives up Śiva-rātri, destroys all the fruits of his worship (of the deity to whom he is devoted). Everyone who performs this vrata has to observe certain

restrictions, viz. non-injury, truthfulness, freedom from anger, celibacy, compassion, forbearance and he has to be calm in mind, devoid of fits of passion and has to perform austerities and he should be free from malice; knowledge of this vrata should be imparted to such a one provided he follows his preceptor if one imparts it otherwise, one goes to hell.

The proper time for this vrata is night, since, as stated in the Skanda — 'goblins, the Saktis and Śiva (who wields the trident) move about at night and therefore these are to be worshipped at that time on caturdaśi.' The Skanda provides that a fast should be observed on that of the dark half that is joined to *niśitha* (i.e. that exists at that time) ; that tithi is the best and leads to companionship with Śiva'.

Hemādri quotes Nāgarakhāṇḍa as follows:—

“on the 14th of the dark half of 'Māgha I shall go in the Kāliyuga on the surface of the earth at night and not by day. I shall undoubtedly locate myself in all Liṅgas, whether movable or permanently fixed, for the removal of the sins committed in the (preceding) year; therefore one who offers worship to me at night with these mantras will be free from sin.”

in the Īṣāna-samhitā it is also said:—

‘The first God (Śiva) appeared in the form of Śiva-Liṅga, whose refulgence was equal to that of a million Suns, on the 14th of Māgha dark half. The tithi to be accepted for the Śiva-rātri vrata should be one that covers that time. A man should perform this vrata on that tithi the 14th that covers the time before and after midnight.’

Owing to the above somewhat conflicting data there is a great deal of discussion on the proper day and time for the vrata. Some works like the Nirṇayamṛta, put emphasis on the word *pradoṣa*, while others emphasise the word *niśītha* and *ardha-rātra*.

The conclusions drawn by Mādhava (the prince of nirṇaya-kāras) are stated here. If caturdaśi covers both *pradoṣa* and *niśītha* then the vrata should be observed on that day. If caturdaśi spreads over two days (i.e. it is mixed with 13th and also with Amāvāsya) and 14th exists at the time of *niśītha* on both days, or if it does not so exist on any of the two days, then covering *pradoṣa* is the determining factor; where 14th covers *pradoṣa* on two days or does not cover *pradoṣa* on any of the two days, then existing at *niśītha* is the determining factor; if caturdaśi having extended over two days covers only one out of the two(*pradoṣa* and *niśītha*) one each day then conjunction with Jayā (i.e. 13th tithi) is the decisive factor.

A brief description of how Śiva-rātri-vrata was performed in ancient times might be gathered from Garuḍa Purana 1.124 11-23.

After honouring Śiva on the 13th tithi one who is to undertake the vrata should resolve to observe certain restrictions. He should declare:—

“O God I shall keep awake the whole night on the 14th tithi I shall make according

to my ability worship, gifts, austerities and *homa*. O Sambhu! on 14th I shall take no food and shall take food on the next day. O Lord! be thou my refuge for securing enjoyment of happiness and moksa.”

The person observing the vrata should approach a teacher and should bathe (the Liṅga) with *pañca-gavya* and with *pañcāmṛta*. He should repeat the mantra ‘*Om namaḥ Śivāya*’ He should worship Śiva with the upacāras beginning with sandalwood paste and he should offer into fire sesame, grains of rice and boiled rice mixed with ghee. After this homa he should offer *pūrṇāhuti*, (an offering made with a full ladle) and listen to music and good stories (about Śiva). He should again offer offerings at midnight, in the 3rd quarter of the night and in the 4th quarter. Having inaudibly repeated the mūlamantra (*om namaḥ śivāya*) he should pray to Śiva about daybreak to forgive his sins with the words:—

“O God! I have worshipped in this vrata without obstacles through your favor; O Lord of the worlds! O Śiva! pardon me. Whatever merit I have won this day and whatever has been offered by me to Śiva I have finished this Vrata to-day through your favor; O bountiful one! be pleased with me, and go to your abode; there is no doubt that I have become pure by merely seeing you.’

He should feed persons who are devoted to contemplating (on Śiva) and should give to them garments, umbrellas and the like;—

‘O Lord of Gods! lord of all things! that bestoweth favor on people; may my lord be gratified by what I have given with faith.’

Having thus prayed for forgiveness, the person undertaking this vrata may carry it on for twelve years. After obtaining fame, wealth, sons and kingdom he may repair to the city of Śiva; he should perform Jāgara (on 14th) in all the 12 months of the year; the one undertaking the vrata after feeding twelve Brāhmaṇas and donating lamps may secure heaven.

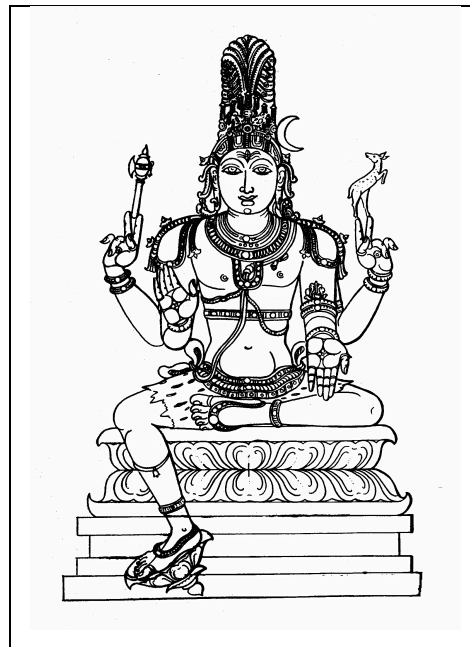
The Tithi-tattva (p. 127) and some details which are interesting. The Liṅga is to be bathed with milk in the first watch of the night, with curds in the 2nd, with ghee in the 3rd and with honey in the 4th. The mantras in the four watches are respectively:— *hrīm, Īṣanāya namaḥ: hrīm Aghorāya namaḥ, hrīm Vamadevāya namaḥ and hrīm Sadyojātāya namaḥ.* The mantra at the time of offering arghya is also different in each of the four watches. It is further provided that there should be songs and dances in the 1st watch of the night. The Varṣakriya-kaumudi provides 2nd, 3rd and 4th watches also the person undergoing vrata has to perform worship, arghya, Japa and listening to stories (about Śiva), to offer hymns of praise and make prostrations and at day-break he should pray for forgiveness with arghya water. If Māgha-Kṛṣṇa 14th falls on a Sunday or Tuesday that is most commendable for this vrata.

Later medieval digests provide an elaborate description of the procedure of Śiva-rātrī vrata. The procedure of Śiva-rātri-vrata is different in the several purānas. For comparison with the one in the Garuḍa quoted above a summary of it from the Dharmasindhu is given here. On the 13th tithi the performer should

take only one meal in the noon, on the 14th after finishing his usual morning duties and rites, he should make a saṅkalpa in the morning with a mantra:—

“I shall perform this Śiva-rātri vrata that yields great rewards; O Lord of the world! may it be without obstacles through your favor. On the 14th I shall be without food and shall take my meal on the next day for enjoyment of pleasures and mokṣa, O Lord be you my refuge.”

If the performer be a brāhmana, he should recite the two Rig verses — “*rātrīm prapadye*” and cast water. In the evening (of 14th) he should take a bath with black sesame, should apply the tripundra mark with ashes to his forehead and also holds rosary of *rudrākṣa* (berry of *Elaeocarpus Ganitrus*), should go to a temple of Śiva at the beginning of night, should wash his feet should take *ācamana* (should sip water) and should make a saṅkalpa — “I shall perform the pūjā of the first watch on Śiva-rātri”; if he intends to perform separate pūjās on all the four watches or if he wants to perform a pūjā only once he should say:—



‘I shall perform the worship of Śiva on Śiva-rātri for securing the favor of Śiva.’ Then he should bow to the sage, metre and Sadāśiva and perform *nyasa* on the several parts of the body from the heart with appropriate mystic letters and mantras (such as ‘*om namas-tat-purusaya namaḥ hrdaye*’ to the last ‘*om yam-āstrāya-phaṭ*’) then he should worship the jar (*kalaśa*) and contemplate on Śiva as portrayed in the verse quoted below.

He should then consecrate a Liṅga by performing the *prāṇa-pratistha* and should invoke Śiva with four mantras and pray Śiva to be present in the Liṅga till the end of the pūjā. If the Liṅga is already permanently fixed or if the Liṅga though not fixed, has already been established with the necessary samskāras he should omit the details from *prāṇa-pratistha* to *āvāhana*. Then he should perform the remaining upacāras (out of 16) from *āsana* to the last. As regards snāna it is provided that the Liṅga is to be bathed with *pañcāmṛta* with the *mūla-mantra* (*śivāya namaḥ*) and the mantras ‘*āpyāyasva*’ (R.V.1:91:16 ff) and should wash it with pure water with the three verses *āpo-hiṣṭha* (R.V. 10:9.1-3). Then he should perform *abhiṣeka* (bathing of the deity) with water made fragrant with sandalwood, saffron and camphor to the accompaniment of the Rudra mantras recited once or repeated eleven times and of the Puruṣa-sūkta (R.V. 10:90). At the end of *snāna* (of the Liṅga) the performer should give *ācamama* water (to the Liṅga) and perform tarpana with water mixed with matas for bilva with eight names (Bhava &c.) and the wives of these eight.

CHAPTER 11.

1. Holikā.

Holi or Holikā is a festival of unmixed gaiety and frolics throughout India, though all parts do not observe it in the same way. One element, viz. bonfire, is present almost everywhere except in Bengal. The number of days during which this festival is observed also varies from province to province. Another item which is common to many parts of India is the sprinkling of friends with colored water from bamboo or metal syringes or with red powder and this merriment is indulged in even now by persons in high places. In the Konkan men dressed as women accompanied by several persons go about with songs (often obscene) and music and dance. The only religious element is the worship of Kṛṣṇa in Bengal and in some provinces where bonfires are made a priest is engaged to perform pūjā before the bonfire. People go around the fire throwing coconuts in the burning wood and grass, taking them out half-burnt and distributing the singed kernel among the people present as *prasāda*. It is not possible nor necessary to set out in this notice all the varying details of this festival throughout the whole of India.

This festival is very ancient. Originally the form of the word was Holakā and from references in the bhāṣya of Sabara on the Pūrva-mīmāṃsa-Sūtra (15. 15-23) it appears that it was in ancient times a usage very prevalent in the eastern parts of Bhārata. But Jaimini and Sabara appeal to hold that Holikā should be observed by all Āryas. In the Kāthaka grhya 73:1 there is the *sūtra* 'Rākā Holāke' which is explained by the comentator Devapāla as follows:— Holi is a special rite performed for the *saubhāgya* of women and in that rite Rākā (Full Moon) is the deity'. Other commentators interpret it differently. Among the twenty *krīḍas* found in the whole of Bhārata and also restricted to certain provinces only and mentioned by Vātsyayāna in his Kāma Sūtra (14: 4:8) is Holākā which is explained by the commentary Jayamaṅgala as comprising the sprinkling of each other by people on Phalguna Full Moon with coloured water discharged from a syringe and throwing perfumed powder.

Hemādri on Kāla (Po 106) quotes a verse from Brhadyama in which Holikā-Pūrṇimā is called '*Hutāśanī*' (as in modern times) Hemādri further quotes a verse from Liṅga Purāna — “the Phālguna Full-moon day is said to be known as 'Phāgunikā', as full of boyish pranks and tending to the prosperity of people” and another verse from Varāha Purāna where it is qualified as '*patavāsa-vilāsini*' (i.e. containing pranks with powder). Hemādri quotes a long passage from the Bhav. U (chap. 132 1-51) in which Yudhisthira is represented as asking Kṛṣṇa why in each village and town a festival is held on Phālguna full-moon, why boys become boisterous in each house and kindle Holakā; what god is worshipped therein, who introduced the festival and what is done therein and why it is

called *Adādā*. Kṛṣṇa tells him a legend about King Raghu whom the citizens approached with the complaint that a certain *rākṣasī* (ogress) called *Ḍhondhā* troubled boys by day and night. The king consulted his purohita who told him that she was a *rākṣasī*, daughter of *Mālin*, who got from *Śiva* a boon that she would not be liable to be killed by gods or men nor suffer from weapons nor from cold, heat or rain. The priest further told the king that *Śiva* said that she would be in danger from boys going about crazily. The priest added that on *Phalguṇa 15th* the cold season ends and spring starts, that people may laugh and enjoy themselves, that boys with bits of wood in their hands may go out of houses in great glee, collect a heap of wood and grass, set it on fire with *Raksoghna* mantras, clap their hands, go round the fire thrice, laugh, sing and utter obscene words in the popular language and by that noise and loud peals of laughter on the part of boys and by the *homa* the ogress would die. When the king got all this done, the *rākṣasī* expired and the day came to be called '*Adādā*.' and '*Holikā*'.

Then it is further stated that on the next day which is the first tithi of the month of *Caitra* (on the *pūrnimānta* reckoning) people should salute the ashes of the bonfire with a mantra, then *pūjā* of *Kāma* should be made on a square in the house yard in the midst of which square a seat should be arranged and in front a Jar covered with leaves containing *aksatas* and smeared with white sandalwood paste should be placed. The image of *Kāma* should have sandalwood paste applied to it by a beautiful woman and thereafter the priest should make the performer partake of mango blossoms mixed with sandalwood paste. Then donations should be made to learned *Brāhmaṇas*, bards &c according to one's ability with the words:— 'May the God of Love be pleased with me.' The *purāna* winds up with the verse:— "When the season of frost ends on the 15th of the bright half and the time of spring approaches in the morning, that man who partakes of mango blossoms with sandal-wood paste lives in happiness."

Instead of the gay and saturnalia-like practices prevalent in many parts of India about *Holikā*. Bengal celebrates it by the *Dola-Yātra*. The festival should be carried on for five or three days before the Full moon of *Phālguna* on the 14th at the beginning of night an *utsava* in honor of *Agni* is to be celebrated to the east of the *maṇḍapa*. Then an image of *Govinda* is to be made, it is established in a structure with 16 pillars on a *vedika* (raised platform) and it is to be bathed with *pañcāmṛta* and various items of worship are to be offered and seven times the swing on which the image is placed has to be rocked to and fro. Fire kindled on the first day is to be preserved till the days of the festival end. At the end the swing is to be rocked 21 times. It is narrated that king *Indradyumna* started this swing festival in *Vṛndāvana*. By means of this *utsava* one becomes free from all sins. Briefly, the conclusion is that *Dolayātra* must be performed when the Full Moon tithi is running whether there is *Uttara-phalguni-nakṣatra* or not.

As *Holikā* is mentioned by *Jaimini* and the *Kāthaka-grhya*, it follows that it

prevailed at least some centuries before Christ. The Kāma Sūtra and Bhaviṣyottara connect it with spring and was performed at the end of the year (on pūrṇimānta reckoning). Therefore the bonfire represents the expiry of the winter season and heralds the warmth and love-making of spring.

The sprinkling of colored water and powder is an additional item in the celebration of the delights of spring. In some provinces this sprinkling is done on the very day of the Holikā, while in the Deccan it is indulged in on the 5th day (popularly called *Ranga-pañcamī*) after Holikā bonfire. Though the Holikā festival is composite in several parts of India and is celebrated on more days than one, in origin it is no more than a spring festival. In some parts mud is also thrown by people at each other on the day after bonfire. That is probably an extension of the idea of applying ashes of the bonfire to one's forehead and the body on the day after it. The usage in some parts of creating noise by striking the back of one's hand against one's mouth accompanied by an obscene reference to sex is a further perversion due to welcoming the advent of spring which is traditionally the season of love-making.

2. Grahaṇa (eclipse, solar and lunar)

Great importance was attached from very ancient times to eclipses. An extensive literature has accumulated on this subject.

A total eclipse of the Sun is referred to even in the Rig Veda 5:40.5,6,8 —

‘O Sun when Svarbhānu, the son of an Asura, struck you with darkness. O Indra! when you struck: down the wiles of Svarbhānu that existed below the heaven, Atri secured the Sun which had been concealed by darkness that Deviated from the usual rule (or law) by means of the highest (or 4th) prayer' &c.

It is stated in the Sāṅkhāyana Brāhmaṇa (24-3) that the Atris performed the three day before Visuvat and thereby smote the demon Svarbhānu that had pierced the sun with darkness i.e. the solar eclipse (In R.V. 5:40:5 ff) took place three days before the autumnal Visuvat (equinox).

It appears from the Brhat-samhitā that the real cause of eclipses was known to Indian astronomers several centuries before Varāhamihra (1st half of 6th century A.D.) who remarks —

‘In a lunar eclipse the moon enters into the shadow of the earth and in a solar eclipse the moon enters the Sun (i.e. comes between the sun and the earth), that this cause of eclipses was found by (former) ācāryas who had a divine insight, that Rāhu is not the cause (of eclipses), this is the true state that the Sāstra (of astronomy) declares (or this is the real intent of śāstra)’.

In spite of this correct theory of eclipses, common people and even learned men (not astronomers) then believed and do believe up to the present day that Rāhu is the cause of eclipses and regard an eclipse as a special occasion for bath, gifts, Japa, śrāddha and the like. Varāhamihra makes an effort to square Śruti, Smṛti, popular belief and real astronomical doctrine by the remark that there was an

Asura on whom a boon was conferred by Brahmā — 'You will be gratified by a portion of the gifts and offerings made on an eclipse', that Asura remains present to receive his portion and that therefore it is metaphorically (poetically) said that he is Rāhu. Rationalism and popular traditions and superstitions cannot go together. Some difference was made between an eclipse of the Sun and that of the moon. Vyāsa says: —

“An eclipse of the moon is one hundred thousand times (more meritorious than an ordinary day) and an eclipse of the Sun ten times more so than the preceding and if the waters of the Ganges are near (for a bath) then a moon eclipse is one million times (more meritorious) and a sun's eclipse is ten times more so than the preceding.”

The first duty of a person on seeing an eclipse is to bathe, It is said 'on seeing Rāhu (i.e. eclipse) every one becomes impure. They should first bathe and then do their usual duties and should give up food already cooked (before the eclipse)'. Peculiar sanctity was deemed to attach to the time of *grahana*. If a person does not take a bath at the time of eclipse at the passage (of the sun) from one rāśi to another, there is no doubt that he would suffer from leprosy for seven future lives and sorrow would be his lot.'



He should take a bath in cold water and in as holy a place as possible. The holiest bath is the one in the Ganges or Godāvāri or at Prayaga. Then in any one of the big rivers such as the six rivers connected with Himavat mountain and the six south of the Vindhya mentioned in the Brahma Purāna, then in any other water, since at the time of eclipse all water becomes holy like Ganges water. A bath with hot water was allowed only to children, old men and persons that were ill. One had to take a bath when the eclipse began, to perform homa, worship of gods and sṛāddha while the eclipse was in progress, to make gifts when the eclipse is about to end, and to take a bath again when the sun or moon became free from eclipse. Even a person who is impure owing to a birth or death has to take a bath on an eclipse but he is not to make a gift or to perform sṛāddha (according to Gauda writers), but the Madana-ratna and the Nirṇaya-sindhu refute this view and hold that in an eclipse even one who is in *aśauca* can take a bath, perform sṛāddha and *puraścāraṇa*.

In the Purāṇas and medieval digests some distinction as regards merit at holiness was made between eclipses in certain months and baths in certain rivers or holy places. The Kālanirṇaya (p 350) especially commends the Godāvāri for a bath in a lunar eclipse and one in the Narmadā for a solar eclipse. The Kṛtyakalpataru (Naiyatakāla), Hemādri on Kāla and the Kāla-viveka quote a long passage from the Devī Purāna, some verses of which may be rendered here:— 'an eclipse in

Kartika is the highest (in merit) at the confluence of the Gangā and Yamunā, in Margaśīrsa on Devīkā, in Pauṣa Narmadā is holy, in Māgha Sannihitā is holy' &c.

The general rule is that one should not take a bath, make a gift or perform a śrāddha at night. But eclipses were an exception as regards bath gift and śrāddha. Yajñavalkya enumerates eclipses among the proper times for śrāddha. It is stated by Śatatāpa that gifts, baths, tapas and śrāddha at the time of eclipses yield inexhaustible (rewards or merit); the night is a rākṣasī elsewhere (at times other than those of eclipses); therefore one should avoid it (in other matters). A passage is quoted from the Mahābhārata on *ayana* and *Visuva* days and on the occasion of the eclipses of the sun and the moon, one should make a gift of land together with daksina to a deserving brāhmaṇa'. Yajñavalkya succinctly observes —

“not by learning alone nor by *tapas* alone (does one become a deserving person); that is declared a deserving person (*pātra*) in whom these two (*vidyā* and *tapas*) and actions (appropriate to these) are found.”

Numerous inscriptions published so far bear witness to the fact that over the whole of India ancient and medieval kings and well-to-do people carried out to the letter this recommendation of making gifts of land on eclipses.

As regards śrāddha it is often difficult to perform it in the time of an eclipse for two reasons eclipses are partial and the time is short; Besides there is a prohibition to eat food during an eclipse a *prājapatya* expiation is prescribed for the eating of food during on eclipse. It is therefore provided in some smṛtis and digests that the śrāddha performed should be the *āma-śrāddha* or *hema-śrāddha*. Though the person performing śrāddha in an eclipse is deemed to earn great merit, the person partaking of śrāddha dinner is liable to undergo an expiation and is generally looked down upon.

The Mitāksari on Yaj I 217-218 quotes the first quarter of a verse ‘one should not eat during a solar or lunar eclipse.’ Therefore a good Brāhmaṇa cannot be easily secured and the performance of śrāddha with details is well-nigh impossible even though Satatapa and others state that it is obligatory:—

‘on seeing Rahu (i.e. an eclipse) one should perform a śrāddha even at the cost of all his wealth; one who does not perform śrāddha then sinks like a cow in mud.’

The order of several acts on an eclipse is:— first bath in Ganges or offer water, *prāṇāyāma*, *tarpana*, *japa* of *Gāyatrī*, *homa* in fire with sesame with the *vyāhṛtis* and the mantras for the planets as in Yāj. 1 300-301, then *āma śrāddha*, gifts of gold, food, cows and land.

In these days most people except very sophisticated ones still take a bath on eclipses and make some gifts also, but do not proceed further in the matter of eclipses. An eclipse is the best time for *japa* and for *dikṣā* (initiation) and perfection in the mantras peculiar to various deities:— ‘one should engage in

Japa and the like while an eclipse of the sun or moon is in progress; one should not bathe nor eat food during that time, but when the sun and the moon are free from eclipse one should bathe and partake of food one may engage in the japa of the Gayatri mantra and it is laid down that if one does not engage in japa on an eclipse one becomes sinful. For *dīkṣā* as to mantras seven days from eclipse are allowed. Solar eclipse is the best time for *dīkṣā*.

The *Puṇya-kāla* (the holy period) in the case of eclipses lasts only as long as the eclipse is visible to the eye. Jābāli says — 'In the case of *saṅkrānti* the puṇyakāla is 16 kālas on both sides thereof, but in the case of a lunar or solar eclipse it lasts only so long as the eclipse is visible.' This leads on to a question that is very much discussed in the several medieval works and on which there is great divergence of views. Much emphasis is laid on the words '*yāvad-darśana-gocaraḥ*' and '*rāhu-darśane*' occurring in several verses (quoted in the notes, 633, 639 &c.) The Kṛtya-kalpa-taru (Naiyatakāla) argues that in those passages '*darśana*' (being visible) is declared to be the cause or occasion of the several acts (*snāna*, *dāna* &c.) to be performed in an eclipse, that an eclipse is an occasion only when it is known that it has occurred, and that knowledge must be derived from the eye and that therefore when the Sun or Moon is screened from view by clouds one need not enter upon a bath and the like prescribed in the case of an eclipse. Hemādri on Kāla quotes this view and criticizes it in several ways. He first relies on Manu IV. 37 that prescribes that one should never gaze at the sun when it is rising or setting or when it is eclipsed or reflected in water or when it is in mid-sky. If actual seeing were necessary, that is an impossible condition as Manu has prohibited it and the result would be that one need not bathe when an eclipse is really on. He further says that Siṣṭas do observe bath &c even if they do not actually see the eclipse Therefore, he proposes that *puṇya-kāla* exists as long as the eclipse is deduced to last from the śāstra (of astronomy).

The Kṛtya-ratnākara (pp. 625-26) discusses the question, remarks that *snāna* and the other prescribed actions should be performed during the period in which the eclipse can be seen. It was argued by some that an eclipse by itself (and not seeing it) is the occasion on which bath, gift &c. must be observed; to this the Kāla-viveka gave the reply that if mere existence of an eclipse an occasion for bath then the unacceptable conclusion would be that even if the moon were to be eclipsed (in some other country) *according* to astronomical calculations a person in a different country would have to undergo a bath by day for a lunar eclipse in a distant land. The Smṛti-kaustubha and Samayaparakāsā therefore lay down what is meant by '*darśana-gocaraḥ*' is that when one knows from the astronomical science that the eclipse is capable of being seen with the eye in a particular country one should at the respective times perform bath and the like (even though one may not actually *see* it). The Samvatsara-pradipa is quite explicit —

'that is said to be an eclipse which *can be observed* by the eye; one should perform religious acts on such an eclipse, but not on mere calculation.'

If a solar eclipse occurs on a Sunday and a lunar one on Monday, such a conjunction was called Cūḍāmani and it was laid down that a Cūḍāmani eclipse yields one million times as much merit as an eclipse on other week days.

Some held that on the day previous to an eclipse one should observe a fast; but Hemādri provided that a fast was to be observed on the day of the eclipse. A householder however who had a son living was not to observe a fast as laid down in a text.

About partaking of food before, during and after an eclipse elaborate rules were laid down from comparatively early times. The Viṣṇu-dharma-Sūtra provides:—

'one must not eat during an eclipse of the moon or sun; he should eat, after having previously taken a bath, when the eclipse is at an end; if the sun or moon have set before the eclipse was over he must bathe and on the next day he may eat again after having seen the Sun rise'

This is elaborated in two verses quoted in several works:—

“One should not take food before a solar eclipse and also in the evening of the day of a lunar eclipse; and one should not eat when the eclipse is in progress; but when the sun or moon is free from eclipse one may, after a bath, partake of food; when the moon is free from eclipse one may take food (even at night thereafter) provided it is not *mahāniśa*, when the sun or moon sets before being free from eclipse, one should see them rising the next day, bathe and then partake of food.”

It was further prescribed that not only was one not to eat during an eclipse, but in the case of a lunar eclipse one was not to eat for three *praharas* (9 hours or 22 ½ ghatikas) before the eclipse started and for four *praharas* before a solar eclipse starts but this does not apply to children, old men and women. The period of three or four *praharas* before an eclipse was called and even now is called 'Vedha'. The Kṛtyata-tattva (P.434) collects together in one place all the above propositions about taking food. Although these rules are not generally observed nowadays by people in cities, in the author's boyhood they were universally observed by almost all adults educated or illiterate.

Certain astrological results were deemed to follow from eclipses. One or two are cited here for illustration. The Viṣṇu-dharmottara states that if in one and the same month there is first an eclipse of the moon and than of the Sun, that occurrence would tend to create disputes between brāhmana and kṣatriyas, but if the opposite was the case, then there would be prosperity. The same Purāna says that persons born on the nakṣatra on which there is an eclipse of the sun or moon suffer troubles unless they perform the śānti rites.

Hemādri (on Kāla pp 392-93) quotes several verses from Garga about the prognostications derived from eclipses of the sun and moon when they are in certain nakṣatras. Atri provides:—

‘When the moon and the sun are eclipsed in the nakṣatra of a person’s birth that forebodes disease, long journeys, death and great danger from the king (of the country)’