

प्रकाशितोयं राजर्षे शिवलिङ्गसमन्वितः ॥
 स राजा भूतले पुण्ये ख्यातव्यो नात्र संशयः ॥ ८१ ॥
 ततः प्रभृति राजर्षे मानसाख्यसरोवरः ॥
 ऋषिगम्यो सुगम्योभूद् गिरिराजशिरोपरिः(रि?) ॥ ८२ ॥
 मान्धातुश्चरितं राजन् यः शृणोति समाहितः ॥
 प्राप्नोति विष्णुभवनं यावदाहूतसंलवम् ॥ ८३ ॥

इति श्रीस्कन्दपुराणे मानसखण्डे मान्धातुश्चरितं नाम दशमोऽध्यायः ॥ १० ॥

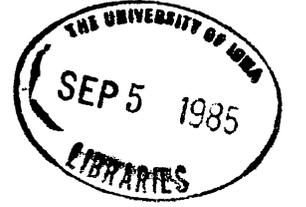
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आत्मा पुराणं वेदानाम्



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IS ŚAṆKARA'S ASSERTION OF THE PURĀṆIC VIEW
ABOUT NARAKA VALID ?

By

RAM SHANKAR BHATTACHARYA

While commenting on the Brahmasūtra अपि च सप्त (3.1.15) Śaṅkarācārya observes : अपि च सप्त नरका रौरवपमुखा दुष्कृतफलोपभोगभूमि-
त्वेन स्मर्यन्ते पौराणिकैः¹.

This statement shows two points :

(i) The subject of hells has not been dealt with in the Vedānta or Upaniṣads (i. e. in the Brāhmaṇas) as may be known from the use of the word Paurāṇika (which may include the Itihāsas also).

(ii) The Purāṇas contain lists of hells which mention seven names beginning with Raurava. Since Śaṅkara does not show any alternative view it may be supposed that this view is held by all the Purāṇas.

Here we are to say nothing about the first point.² We are going to examine here the validity of the second point by showing the views of the Purāṇas. *A perusal of the current Purāṇas shows that the statement of Śaṅkara is not absolutely correct—a fact which must be considered in determining the nature of the composition of the current Purāṇas.*³

1. This sūtra has been explained in the same way by Rāmānuja, Śrīkaṇṭha and Nimbārka. The Madhva school is of the opinion that there are two kinds of hells namely *nitya* and *anitya*, and they are two and five in number respectively. In the list of the five *anitya narakas* Raurava is read in the first place.
2. For the views of the Vedic Saṁhitas and Brāhmaṇas (including Āraṇyakas and Upaniṣads) about the nature, number and names of narakas, see Hist. of Dharmaśāstra IV., pp. 154-156.
3. Since Śaṅkara expressly used the word Paurāṇika we are not concerned here with the views of Smṛtis like the Manu and Yājñavalkya. It may be noted that both Manu and Yājñavalkya recognized 21 (ekaviṁśa) hells, beginning with Tāmisra—the former mentions Raurava in the 4th place (4. 87-90), while the latter mentions Raurava in the 5th place (3. 222-224).

(1) Brahma-p.⁴—It says that there are 22 hells (214.14) and mentions Raurava in the first place (214.15-17). In ch. 215 it describes many hells beginning with Mahāvici and says that the hells are *śatasahasrāṇi lakṣakoṭīśatāni* (215.137).

(2) Padma-p.—In 6.116.2-24 it names 7 hells beginning with Taptabāluka (Raurava is not mentioned). Each hell is said to have six subdivisions and each subdivision is of two kinds (dry, *śuṣka* and wet, *ārdra*). Thus the total number of hells comes to 84. It further informs us that the seven hells are associated with seven kinds of sins, namely *prakīrṇa*, *apāṅkteya*, *malinikaraṇa* etc. respectively.

In 6.227.66-72 the number of hells is given as 28 crores (*koṭi* seems to mean here *prakāra*, kind; cp चोराह्वया प्रथमा कोटिः, 67). Twenty-eight names (Ghora, Sughora, Atighora etc.) are given here.

(3) Viṣṇu-p.—In 1.6. 41 it incidentally names seven hells beginning with Tāmisra (mentioning Raurava in the 4th place) though there is no assertion that hells are 7 in number. In 2.6.2-5 it names 28 hells beginning with Raurava and further remarks that there are many others (इत्येवमादय).

(4A) Śiva-p.—In 5.8.17-23 it names a few hells (beginning with Ghora) which are 28 in number. It further states पञ्च पञ्चैव नायकाः, रौरवः प्रथमस्तेषाम् (verses 24-25). (The verses are not quite intelligible).

(4B) Vāyu-p.—In 101.146-149 it names 28 hells and remarks नरका ह्येवमादयः (149). Again in 101.176-177 it says that there are seven hells beginning with Andhatāmisra, though at the time of enumerating them it names Raurava in the first place.

(5A) Bhāgavata-p.—It says that according to some authorities hells are 21 in number (beginning with Tāmisra; Raurava

4. Since the chronology of the Purāṇas is highly controversial, we have thought it proper to mention the Purāṇas in the order in which they are mentioned in the Viṣṇu-p (3. 6. 20-24). We have however added the Vāyu and the Devibhāgavata in the list of the Purāṇas as they are sometimes regarded as the Purāṇas (often called Mahāpurāṇas).

read in the 2nd place) and that if seven more hells are added the number will be twenty-eight. (5.26.7). It further remarks एवंविधा नरका यमालये सन्ति शतशः सहस्रशः (37).

(5B) Devibhāgavata-p.—In 8.21.21 it says that hells are 21 in number though according to some they are 28; it mentions Tāmisra in the first place (Raurava being read in the 3rd place). It further remarks : एवंविधा नरकाः शतशः सन्ति सहस्रशोऽपि (8.21.27-28).

(6) Nāradya-p.—It names many hells beginning with Tapana (Raurava read in the 4th place) though the number of hells is not given.

(7) Mārkaṇḍeya-p.—It describes (ch. 12) seven hells beginning with Raurava though it does not say that the hells are seven in number.

(8) Agni-p.—In 120.5 it simply says that there are many (*naike*) hells below the earth. In ch. 203 more than thirty hells are mentioned beginning with Mahāvici; there is no assertion about the number of hells here. In 371.13 it speaks of 28 crores of hells beginning with Ghora (*koṣi* means class or group; चौराख्या प्रथमा कोटिः, 371.14) and names 28 hells. After stating अष्टाविंशतिकोटोनां पञ्च पञ्च च नायकाः । रौरवाद्याः शतं चैकं चत्वारिंशच्चतुष्टयम् (371.19) it names about 20 hells in verses 20-21 beginning with Tāmisra. (The passage is however not quite intelligible).

(9) Bhaviṣya-p.—It simply says that hells are situated below the *pātālas*; they are many crores in number beginning with Raurava (Madhyama. 1.3.22).

(10) Brahmavaivarta-p.—In 2.29 it speaks of 86 *naraka-kunḍas* beginning with Vahni-kunḍa. Though it mentions Kumbhī-pāka, Kālasutra etc. yet it is silent on Raurava.

(11) Liṅga-p.—In 1.53.44-46a it says that there are 28 hells beginning with Raurava and ending with Avici. There seem to be a few corrupt readings here and as such the passage is not quite intelligible.

(12) Varāha-p.—In 198.1-2 it states that there are eight hells and mentions Tapta in the first place (Raurava being mentioned in the 4th place).

(13) Skanda-p—(i) In Kumārikākhaṇḍa (39.10) it is said that there are 21 principal (*rājānaḥ*) hells; they are named beginning with Raurava (11-14). It is further remarked that hells are 55 crores in number. (ii) Kārttikamāsamāhātmya 29.22-29 state that seven hells are connected with seven kinds of *pātakas*, namely *prakīrṇa*, *apāñkteya*, *malinīkaraṇa*, etc. *Pātakas* are either dry or wet and they are 84 in number. (iii) Setumāhātmya 30.3-8 name 28 hells beginning with Tāmisra mentioning Raurava in the fourth place. (iv) Veṅkaṭācalamāhātmya 12.3-7 are the same as Setumāhātmya 30.3-8. (v) Kāśikhaṇḍa 28.75-77 name 19 hells (beginning with Raurava) without mentioning their number. (vi) Revākhaṇḍa 159.101 simply says that hells are 28 crores in number (अष्टाविंशतिकोटयः). (vii) Avantikṣetramāhātmya ch. 29 names many hells beginning with Raurava without saying anything about the number of hells. (viii) Nāgarakhaṇḍa 26.18-21 say that hells are innumerable and remark that there are 21 principal hells beginning with Raurava. (ix) Nāgarakhaṇḍa 226.19 simply says that there are 21 hells.

(14) Vāmana-p.—It speaks of 21 hells beginning with Raurava (11.50-58).

(15) Kūrma-p.—It simply says that below the *pātālas* there are hells beginning with Kāla. (1.43.24).

(16) Matsya-p.—No enumeration of hells.

(17) Garuḍa-p.—In 1.57.4-7 it speaks of 28 hells without mentioning their number (beginning with Raurava). (These are said to be situated in the Puṣkara dvīpa). In 1.105 more than 12 names of hells are mentioned beginning with Mahāraurava, though the number of hells is not given.

(18) Brahmāṇḍa-p.—It says सर्वे नरका अन्वतामिस्रकादयः but at the time of enumerating the seven hells it reads Raurava in the first place. In the names of hells there is no mention of Andhātāmisra (3.2.179-180). In 3.2.146-150 it names 28 hells and remarks नरका ह्येवमादयः .

Since we are not of the opinion that the Upapurāṇas are inferior in character to the Purāṇas, we think it justified to give here the views of some of the Upapurāṇas about the number of hells.

(19) Narasiṃha—It simply says that the hell is situated below the *pātālas* (*pātālatāle narake*, 30. 11).

(20) Bṛhannārādiya— It names a few hells beginning with Tapana; Raurava is mentioned in the fourth place (14. 2 ff.).

(21) Viṣṇudharmottara—It names a few hells beginning with Tāmisra, mentioning Raurava in the 4th place (2.119. 2-4). The Smṛtimuktāphala quotes a passage from the V. Dh. U. which says that there are 28 crores of awful (*ghora*) hells (p. 859).

(22) Devī-p.—In ch. 12 it says that hells are 50 crores; among these 140 hells are principal (चत्वारिंशत् शतं तेषां प्रधानम्) (Avīci being read in the first place). Of these, three hells are the highest, namely Avīci, Raurava and Kumbhīpāka.

(23-25) There is no account of hell in the Bṛhaddharma, Kalki and Saura.

(26) It is interesting to note that the Mahābhārata contains no statement about the number of hells. The southern recension of the MBH. (Anuśāsana-p.) however mentions five hells beginning with Raurava (पञ्चैते नरकाह्वयाः, प्रथमं रौरवं नाम) and further remarks that there are other hells beginning with Avīci (Cr. ed. App. I. 15, p. 984; Gītā Press edition pp. 5983-84; vide ch. 145).

A comparison of Śaṅkara's statement with the aforesaid Purāṇic accounts of hells reveals the following facts :

(1) Śaṅkara was unaware of the view of the Purāṇas that the number of hells is 21, 28 etc.

(2) Śaṅkara was unaware of the view that in some enumerations of hells Avīci etc. were read in the first place.^b

(3) Only a few Purāṇas speak of seven hells, though each of them does not mention Raurava in the first place.

(4) It is noteworthy that the Mārkaṇḍeya-p. speaks of seven hells beginning with Raurava. Since it does not say that the number of hells is seven it is doubtful whether Śaṅkara has based his view on this Purāṇa.

5. It is to be noted that the word *pramukha* in रौरवप्रमुख must be taken in the sense of *ādi* (read in the first place in the enumeration of hells) and not in the sense of chief (*pradhāna*), for Raurava is not regarded as the chief of hells in the Purāṇas.

(5) It is quite clear that Śaṅkara's view is not based on the Viṣṇu-p. which is usually regarded as one of the oldest Purāṇas.

(6) The two Purāṇas namely Vāyu and Brahmāṇḍa state that the number of hells is seven and mention Raurava in the first place.⁶ *Śaṅkara's view is undoubtedly based on these passages.* It is well known that a few verses quoted by Śaṅkara in his bhāṣyas are found in these two Purāṇas.

(7) A comparative study of the Vāyu and Brahmāṇḍa passages reveals that the names of the seven hells are : Raurava, Tapas, Kālasūtra, Apratiṣṭha, Avīci, Loha and Avidheya. The Purāṇic passages afford reasons for these names (Vāyu-p. 101.180-183; Brahmāṇḍa-p. 3.2.183-186). It may also be observed that Mahāraurava is not the name of a distinct hell; it seems to be a developed form of Raurava.

6. Since the Vāyu and Brahmāṇḍa passages of hells seem to be the oldest as well as highly authoritative they are quoted here :

भूमेरवस्तात् सप्तैव नरकाः संप्रकीर्तिताः । १७९ ख

अघर्मसूतयस्ते स्युरन्वतामिस्रकादयः ।

रौरवः प्रथमस्तेषां महारौरव एव च ॥१८०

अस्याघः पुनरप्यन्यः शीतस्तप इति स्मृतः ।

तृतीयः कालसूत्रः स्याद् महाहर्विविधः स्मृतः ॥ १८१

अप्रतिष्ठश्चतुर्थः स्याद् अवीचिः पञ्चमः स्मृतः ।

लोहः षष्ठः स्मृतस्तेषामविधेयस्तु सप्तमः । १८२

(ब्रह्माण्ड० ३।२।१७९ ख-१८२)

भूमेरवस्तात् सप्तैव नरकाः परिकीर्तिताः ॥ १७६ ख

अघर्मसूनवस्ते स्युरन्वतामिस्रकादयः ।

रौरवः प्रथमस्तेषां महारौरव एव च ॥ १७७

अस्याघः पुनरप्यन्यः शीतस्तप इति स्मृतः ।

तृतीयः कालसूत्रः स्यान् महाहर्विविधिः स्मृतः ॥ १७८

अप्रतिष्ठश्चतुर्थः स्यादवीची पञ्चमः स्मृतः ।

लोहपृष्ठस्तमस्तेषामविधेयस्तु सप्तमः ॥ १७९

(वायु० १०१।१७६-१७९)

After these lines the precise character of each of these hells has been shown in Brahmāṇḍa-p. 8. 2. 183-186 and Vāyu-p. 101. 180-183.

The line 'अधर्मसूतयः (or अधर्मसूनवः) ते स्युरन्वतामिस्त्रकादयः' presents some difficulty, for the name Andhatāmisra or Andhatāmisraka is not found in the list of the seven hells. Can it be surmised that there was another list of seven hells in which Andhatāmisra⁷ was read in the first place, and that since the list became obsolete it was not reproduced by the authors of these two Purāṇas? These authors seem to refer to this list unconsciously as it was known to them. This is however a conjecture only and the significance of the aforesaid line requires to be determined. The readings in these two Purāṇic passages are corrupt in a few places.

(8) It may be surmised that Śaṅkara used the word Paurāṇika (authors of the Purāṇas) deliberately as he knew that the Mahābhārata did not contain any passage on the number of hells,⁸ It appears that the passage in the southern recension of the Mahābhārata was unknown to Śaṅkara.⁹

7. A hell called Andhatāmisra has been mentioned not only in some of the Purāṇas but also in other works; cp. Vyāsabhāṣya : तत्रावीचेरपरि निविष्टाः षण् महानरकभूमयो....महाकालाम्बरोपरौरव-महारौरव-कालसूत्रान्त्रतामिस्राः (3. 26).
8. It is to be carefully noted that the term Purāṇa signifies a particular class of literature, while the term Smṛti (used by Śaṅkara while quoting authoritative passages) includes not only the Smṛti texts but the Purāṇas, and the Itihāsās also. In most of the places Smṛti seems to have been used in the sense of 'works other than the Vedas'.
9. It is remarkable to note that Vijñānabhikṣu did not explain the aforesaid Brahmasūtra as referring to the seven hells but to the seven *pātālas* (सप्तपातालवासिनोऽपि सप्तविधा जीवाः . All the Purāṇas unanimously agree that the *pātālas* are seven in number. It appears that Vijñānabhikṣu (who was well-versed in the Purāṇas) was aware of the fact that hells were not unanimously regarded as seven in number by the Purāṇas; that is why he explained the sūtra in the aforesaid manner.

THE MAGIAN PRIESTS AND THEIR IMPACT ON SUN-WORSHIP*

By

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There is controversy among the scholars regarding the homeland of Magian priests. Generally it is accepted that the Magas of Purāṇas were the Sun-worshipping Magi priests of Iran. Originally they were a priestly tribe of Medea who used to worship Sun and Fire-god under the name of Mithra. The faith of these fire and Sun worshipping priests of Medea was highly mixed up with Chaldean and Babylonian elements and before coming to India their ritual might have been influenced with Iranian belief and rituals.

There are references regarding the coming of the Magas in India from the Śakadvīpa with a view to accepting and performing the priesthood of Sun-temples. Magas are mentioned as one of the four castes of the Śakadvīpa in the Mahābhārata and the Viṣṇu Purāṇa. The Samba Purāṇa mentions Magas as their four castes—Maga, Mamago, Manas and Mandaga which is certainly the outcome of the influence of four varṇas of Indian origin.² Again the Samba Purāṇa refers that Magian priests were brought to Jambudvīpa from Śakadvīpa³. In Indian litera-

* Paper presented at the 44th Session of Indian History Congress, Burdwan University, W. B.

1. Moulton, The Treasure of Magi, page 9.

2. Samba Purāṇa, 26/30-31 :

गगाश्च मामगाश्चैव मानसा मन्दगास्तथा
मगा ब्राह्मणभूयिष्ठा मामगाः क्षत्रियास्तथा
वैश्यास्तु मानसा ज्ञेयाः शूदास्तेषां तु मन्दगाः ॥

3. Samba Purāṇa, 26/28-29 :

मम पूजापरान् कृत्वा शाकद्वीपादिहानय
लवणोदात्परेपारे क्षीरोदेन समावृतम् ।
जंबुद्वीपात्परं तस्माच्छाकद्वीप इति श्रुतः
तत्र पुण्या जनपदाश्चातुर्वर्ण्यं समाश्रिताः ॥