

A REVIEW OF *BRAHMAVAIVARTAPURĀṆA* (BVP) WITH REFERENCE TO *ĀYURVĒDA*

Subhose Varanasi* T. Saketh Ram** Vinod Kumar
Bhatnagar* A. Narayana**** & M.M. Rao***

ABSTRACT

Brahmavaivartapurāṇa is one of the important *Mahāpurāṇa*, which is considered as a *Vaiṣṇavapurāṇa*. The text is divided into four parts called *khaṇḍa* i.e., *Brahma*, *Prakṛti*, *Gaṇapati*, and *Śrīkrṣṇajanmakhaṇḍa*. The total number of chapters are 276 and comprising about 20,500 verses. *Brahmavaivartapurāṇa* comprises both ancient and medieval materials. It considers *Āyurvēda* as *Pañcama Vēda* and devoted 16th chapter of *Brahmakhaṇḍa* which describes the origin of *Āyurvēda* its propagators headed by *Bhāskara* (sun god) and his 16 students and their corresponding books in detail. An account of the *Jvara* (Fever) and other diseases, *Dinacaryā* (daily routine), *Ṛtucaryā* (seasonal regimen), *Tridōṣa* (three humours), their *Prakōpa* (Vitiation) and *Praśamana* (palliation) etc are described in this book. BVP deals with the do's and don't's of food intake, sleep and sexual indulgence in detail which are deemed to be *Trayōpastambha* (three sub pillars of health). The book provides an account of Plant Tulsi's origin and its spiritual importance. *Prakṛti* (nature's) origins, *Pañcamahābhūta* nature of the body are described in *Prakṛtikhaṇḍa*. At the flag end of the book there is a legend describing the origin of Lord *Dhanvantari* and describes his scholarship in the field of *Vēda* and *śāstra*. On the whole *purāṇa* provides glimpse of the life style of a *Vaiṣṇava* devotee and the people of the time when it was compiled. It serves the purpose of a practical manual to lead a healthy life and ensure spiritual growth in the life of any individual who believes in the precepts of this book.

Purāṇa ("ancient" or "old") is the name of a genre (or a group of related genres) of Indian written literature (as distinct from oral literature). Its general themes are history, tradition and religion. It is usually written in the form of stories related by one person to another. Among them *Brahmavaivartapurāṇa* is one of the important *Vaiṣṇava purāṇas*.

* Research officers (Ay.), **Senior Research Fellow (Ay.), ****Director, Indian Institute of History of Medicine, Osmania Medical College Building, Putlibowli, Hyderabad 500095
***Assistant Director (Ay.), Central Council for Research in Ayurveda and Siddha, New Delhi 110058

As per tradition it is said to be written by *Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa*. There is no apparent controversy about *Brahmavaivartapurāṇa*'s being a major *purāṇa*, considered as a *mahāpurāṇa* as it exhibits all the Classic five characteristic features of *purāṇas* viz.,

1. Primary creation (*sarga*)
2. Dissolution (*Pratisarga*)
3. Genealogy (*varṇśa*)
4. Ages of Manus (*manvantara*)
5. History of Royal dynasties and some illustrious personages (*varṇśānucarita*)

In spite of this general agreement the *Brahmavaivartapurāṇa* rejects the traditional five characteristics covering the *upapurāṇa* and holds the ten topics which are dealt with in a *mahāpurāṇa*. They are primary creation (*śṛṣṭi*), secondary creation (*visṛṣṭi*), stability of the creation (*sthiti*), protection (*pālana*), desire for work (*karmavāsana*), information about different Manus (*manvantara*), description of the final destruction of the world (*Pralaya-varṇana*), showing the way to emancipation (*Mōkṣa-nirūpaṇa*), discourses on Hari (*Harikīrtana*), and discourses on other gods (*Dēvakīrtana*).

Authority of the Text¹

The authority of the text is apparently established, because it is mentioned in older texts i.e., *Matsya*, *Nāradapurāṇa* etc. But there exists a great discrepancy between the *Brahmavaivarta* as mentioned in *Matsya*, *Nāradapurāṇa* and the text that is available now. *Matsyapurāṇa* says that the story of the *Brahmavaivarta* has been narrated by *Sāvarni* to *Nārada*, it includes the episode of *Brahmavarāha*, and it comprises 18,000 verses. But, we do not find even the name of *Sāvarni* in *Brahmavaivarta* now extant, nor the episode of *Brahmavarāha* can be traced to it. It can, therefore, be inferred that the original form of the *purāṇa* has undergone a great change. It is also interesting to note that the only 30 lines out of 1500, quoted from *Brahmavaivarta* in medieval *Smṛtinibandha*, like *Smṛticandrikā*, *Caturvargacintāmaṇi*, *Kālanirṇaya*, *Smṛtitattva*, *Varṣakriyākaumudī*, etc. can be traced to the extant text. It may therefore, be presumed that a considerable part of the older text, containing genealogies, geographical descriptions, etc. has been omitted and replaced by later compositions, which suit the purpose of *Vaiṣṇava* sects. This information has diminished the authority of the *purāṇa* to a great extent.

Date of Composition

It is difficult to determine, the exact period of this composition as material available has similarity with ancient and medieval periods. Wilson's view that the *Brahmavaivartapurāṇa* was composed after the Mohammanan conquest of Northern India, which need not be taken seriously. It is mentioned in *Matsya* and other old *purāṇa*, hence we can accept its existence, in some form or other, much prior to the Mohammanan invasions to North. Johesh Chandra Roy holds that the *purāṇa* was composed during the 8th century A.D. The upper limit of the date of composition may tentatively be fixed in the 8th century because *Śaṅkarācārya* who flourished in the same century, is mentioned in the *Śrīkṛṣṇajñanmakhaṇḍa*. It is probably began to change in its text tenth century onwards.

Jayadēva, the Sanskrit poet who flourished in the 12th century, was acquainted with the *Brahmavaivartapurāṇa*, the text of which was almost settled by that time². The opening verse (*mēghairmēduramambaram* etc.) of *Jayadēva's Gītagōvinda* definitely alludes to an episode narrated in the 15th Chapter of the *Śrīkṛṣṇajñanmakhaṇḍa*. It cannot be ruled out that interpolations, particularly of *Smṛti* material, continued till the 16th century or even till a little later. It can be safely presumed that the additions and alterations were carried out in Bengal. Chaitanya sect, who flourished in the 16th century, interpreted the *Brahmavaivartapurāṇa* almost in its present form, because, a little over sixty verses quoted by him in his *Haribhaktivilāsa*. *Brahmavaivartapurāṇa* comprises both ancient and medieval materials. Hence it is difficult to ascertain the time of composition of ancient portions. Dr. Hazra's quite justified in his statement: "It seems highly probable that before 700 A.D., there existed a *Brahmavaivarta* which is now lost."

Content of the text

Brahmavaivarta literally means 18,000 years (The age of *Brahma*). The *Matsya* and *Nārada* *purāṇa* describe the total number of verses as 18,000. But the actual counting of the verses of the *purāṇa*, now available, gives a total of little over 20,500 verses. The *Brahmavaivartapurāṇa* is divided into four parts called *khaṇḍas*, comprising total 276 chapters. Brief description of the *khaṇḍas* is as follows:

1. **Brahmakhaṇḍa:** The subject matter described in 30 chapters and deals with the creation of the universe including the gods and animate and inanimate beings by *Brahma*, the creator God, who is according to this *purāṇa*, none other than a manifestation of *Kṛṣṇa*, who is far superior and even creator of *Prakṛti*.

2. **Prakṛtikhaṇḍa:** *Prakṛtikhaṇḍa* narrated in 67 chapters and deals with *Prakṛti*, the primordial matter. According to this *purāṇa*, *Prakṛti* is not inert and which is conceived by the *Sāṅkhya* philosophy, but is intelligent, and is considered as the primary goddess of creation. In compliance with *Kṛṣṇa* desire, she is manifested as the five goddesses, viz. *Durgā*, *Rādhā*, *Lakṣmī*, *Sarasvatī*, and *Sāvitrī*. Many stories about these deities have been narrated and rituals for their worship are described in this part.

3. **Gaṇapatikhaṇḍa:** *Gaṇapatikhaṇḍa* narrates in 46 chapters and many legends about *Gaṇeśa* the elephant-headed god, widely worshipped throughout India and even outside. Though named *Gaṇapatikhaṇḍa*, this part deals with the birth and life of both sons of *śiva*, viz. *Gaṇeśa* and *Skanda Kārtikēya*. According to this *purāṇa*, *Gaṇeśa* is also a manifestation of *Kṛṣṇa*. Hence there is no mention of *Gaṇāpatya* sects who worshipped *Gaṇeśa* as the Supreme godhead.

4. **Śrīkṛṣṇajanmakhaṇḍa:** This *khaṇḍa* contains 133 chapters and deals not only with the birth of *Kṛṣṇa*, as signified by the title, but also his whole life, especially his battles and love dalliances with the cowherdesses *Gōpī*, in particular with *Rādhā*, who is not even mentioned in other major *Vaiṣṇava purāṇa* like *Bhāgavata*, *Viṣṇu*, and *Harivaṁśa*. This *purāṇa* has raised *Rādhā* in this *purāṇa*, to a great importance. It is interesting to note that she is depicted here as a married wife of *kṛṣṇa*. The content of this *khaṇḍa* from 44 chapter is known as *Uttarārdha*.

Ayurvedic content in *Brahmavaivartapurāṇa*¹:

Brahmavaivartapurāṇa considers *Āyurvēda* as *Vaidyaka saṁhitā (Āyurvēda)* and designates the status of *pañcama vēda* to it. In *Cikitsā praṇayanē Śōḍaśa Adhyāya* (the 16th chapter) of *Brahmakhaṇḍa*, comprising about 88 verses in which *Āyurvēda* was discussed in detail.

Evolution of Āyurvēda:

According to BVP *Lord Kṛṣṇa* is the propounder of *Āyurvēda* who has passed this treasure to *Bhāskara* (the Sun God) who later written a book, which is named as *Bhāskara saṁhitā* (a text on *Āyurvēda*). *Bhāskara* is said to have 16 disciples who have written specialized books on *Āyurvēda*, which are as follows:

1. *Dhanvantari* - *Cikitsā tattvavijñāna*
2. *Divōdāsa* - *Cikitsā darpaṇa*
3. *Kaśīrāja* - *Divya Cikitsā kaumudī*
- 4.&5. *Aśvinī Kumāras* (Twins) - *Cikitsā-sāraṅtra* (Related to *Bhrama vyādhinivāraka* - Management of Giddiness)
6. *Nakula* - *Vaidyakasarvasva*
7. *Sahadēva* - *Vimardana*
8. *Yama (Sūryaputra)* - *Jñānārṇava*
9. *Cyavana* - *Jivadāna*
10. *Yōgī Janaka* - *Vaidyasandēhabhañjana*
11. *Budha* (Candra's son) - *Sarvasāra*
12. *Jābāla* - *Tantrasāra*
13. *Jājili Muni* - *Vēdāṅgasāra*
14. *Paila* - *Nidāna tantra*
15. *Karatha* - *Sarvadhara tantra*
16. *Agastya* - *Dvaidhanirṇaya tantra*

Definition of Vaidya (physician):

Vaidya (the physician) according to *Āyurvēda* is the leader of the team which takes care of health which is described as *Pāda catuṣṭaya* (four pillars of health care, others being the patient, drug and the disease it self). Among them according to BVP a *vaidya* is defined as:

Vyādhēstattvaparijñānaṁ vēdanāyāśca nigrahaḥ.

Ētadvaidyatvaṁ na vaidyaḥ prabhurāyusaḥ (1.16/25)

The person who is able to understand the nature of the disease and there by relieving (the patient) from the complaints (pain etc..) are the only things which are to be accomplished by the physician, and physician is not the lord of life.

Qualities of ideal Physician:

Āyurvēdasya vijñātā cikitsāsu yathārthavit.

Dharmiṣṭhaśca dayāluśca tēna vaidyaḥ prakīrtitaḥ. (1.16/26)

He who has expertise in the science of *Āyurvēda*, having sound knowledge of treatment, dutymind (*dharma*) and merciful (*dayālu*) is praised as ideal Physician.

Concept of *Prakṛti* and *Pañcamahābhūta*:

All eminent *Āyurvēda* texts including *Bṛhatrayī* describe the evolution of humans in the context of *Prakṛti*, *Puruṣa vivēcana*. They also unanimously agree to the point that the human body is a composition of five *Mahābhūtas*. BVP has an exclusive reference of this information which is as follows:

In *Prakṛti*⁴ *svarūpa tathā bhēda varṇana nāma prathama adhyāya* i.e., the 1st chapter of 2nd *khaṇḍa* - the *Prakṛtikhaṇḍa*, describes elaborately about *Prakṛti* (the nature). *Brahmavaivartapurāna* defines *Prakṛti* as an efficient counterpart in creation, or having best ability to create. In the work *Prakṛti* -*Pra* denotes *Sattvagūṇa*, *Kṛ* denotes *Rajōgūṇa*, *Ti* denotes *Tamōgūṇa*, and a composite of these *Prakṛti* becomes *Triguṇātmaka* possessing all the three qualities. *Brahmavaivartapurāna* considers *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa* as two equal part of the *Parabrahma* (the ultimate creator) and gives equal importance to both. It clearly states that for an enlightened soul there is no differentiation between a masculine and feminine forms.

Pāñcabhautikapuruṣaśca dēhē naśvara ēva ca.

Prṥhvī vāyurākāśō jalam tējastathaiva ca. (2.13/14-24)

BVP considers the body as a destroyable composition of five *Mahābhūta* i.e., *Prṥhvī*, *Jala*, *Agni*, *Vāyu* and *Ākāśa* which is in complete agreement with that of *Āyurvēda*.

The Concepts of *Svasthanvṛta* (Social and preventive medicine)⁵:

Fundamental objectives (uses) of *Āyurvēda* are *Svasthanya svāsthya rakṣaṇam* (preservation of the health of a healthy individual) and *Āturya vikāraprasāmanam*

(alleviation of disease of the sufferer). BVP being a devotee's manual has given foremost importance to preventive health which is otherwise known as *Svasthavṛtta* in *Āyurvēda*.

The Concepts of *Svasthavṛtta* Social and preventive medicine discussed extensively, adapting these principles will keep a person away from Disease and old age

Effective measures to prevent premature aging:

Cakṣurjalām (washing eyes with cold water), *Vyāyāma* (exercise), *Pādāḡhastailamardanam* (application/ massage of soles of both feet with oil), *Karṇa murdhna taila jarāvyādhi naśanam* (Application on Head and dropping of oil in the nose and ear) which is said to destroy the effects of old age, and death.

***Dinacaryā* (daily routine)⁶**

A person is advised to wake up at *Brāhma muhūrta* (early morning in between 4-5 a.m.) and after changing cloths are advised to meditate up on their *Guru* (mentor, guide and philosopher).

Attending Natural call (defecation, urination)

After raising, the person should reach the place of defecation. A person should defecate in a pit, the place should be covered with mud after the act. A person should be quite and calm while attending to natural urges. One should face north in day, west in night, and south during the *Kāla* (intersection of day and night). After completion of the act a person must wash the parts, including penis and hands, feet thoroughly with mud followed by water to avoid soiling clothes, dirty smell, and contamination.

The places, where defecation, urination restricted:

Near water bodies, in the water, on land with burrows (made by animals, rodents), place near to animals, near a temple, near to the trunk of a tree, on the road, a ploughed farm land, farm land where cultivation is in progress, the place where cows are sheltered, river, garden, mud filled land, place near to human habitat, near pillars, on the bridges, in the graveyard, near fire, play ground, forest, a place already cleaned for some other purpose, place near ant hill etc. must be avoided.

Mud not suitable for cleaning after defecation

Mud collected from ant hill, mud dug by rodents, mud underneath water, mud left out after cleaning, mud from walls of house, mud from compost of leaves of fallen trees, mud where animals, insects reside, mud attached to the roots of grass, *Aśvattha* (*Ficus religiosa* Linn) tree, mud from a cross road, from cow herd, from a farm land, garden is not suitable for cleaning act.

Cleaning mouth & brushing teeth

A person should do *Gaṇḍūṣa* (gargle the mouth) with fresh water for 16 times before and after brushing.

Dantaśaucavihīnaśca sarvaśaucavihīnakaḥ. (1.26/49)

Dental hygiene is considered as the foremost cleansing act of a human being. Any one who does not follow this will not enjoy the benefits of cleanliness even they follow other cleansing techniques.

Twigs recommended for brushing teeth

Apāmārga (*Achyranthes aspera* Linn.), *Sindhuvāra* (*Vitex negundo* Linn), *Āmra* (*Mangifera indica* Linn), *Karavēra* (*Nerium indicum* Mill), *Khadīra* (*Acacia catechu* Willd.), *Śirīṣa* (*Albizia lebbek* (Linn) Benth), *Jāti* (*Myristica fragrans* Houtt.), *Punnāga* (*Calophyllum inophyllum* Linn), *Śala* (*Shorea robusta* Gaertn.) *Aśōka* (*Saraca asoca* (Roxb) De Wilde), *Arjuna* (*Terminalia arjuna* W.&A.), *Kṣīrī vṛkṣa* (latex bearing plants), *Kadamba* (*Anthocephalus cadamba* Miq), young shoots of *Jambu* (*Syzygium cuminii* (Linn) Skeels), *Bakula* (*Mimusops elangi* Linn), *Palāśa* (*Butea monosperma* (Lam.) Kuntze).

Twigs not suitable for brushing teeth:

Badara (*Ziziphus jujuba* Lam.), *Pāribhadra* (*Erythrina indica* Lam), *Mandāra* (*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* Linn.), *Śālmālī* (*Bombax ceiba* Linn), the trees & climbers having *Kaṇṭakī* (spines), *Pīpala* (*Ficus religiosa* Linn), *Priyāla* (*Buchnanania lanzan* Spreng), *Tintiḍīka* (*Tamarindus indica* Linn), *Tālakam*, *Kharjūra* (*Phoenix dactilifera* Linn.), *Nārikēla* (*Cocos nucifera*), *Tāla* (*Borassus flabellifer* Linn.)

After brushing bathing is advised. A person is not advised to go into house with out completely wiping water or oil after taking bath, if one does so he will become

wealth less. After bathing a person should take up worship with appropriate hand postures, and in a comfortable posture.

***Rtucaryā* (seasonal routine)⁷**

1. *Vasanta ṛtu* (spring): *Bhramaṇa* (touring, journey), *agnisēvana* (*svalpa mātrā*) limiting the usage of fire, and heat, *bālā sēvana* sexual indulgence with young women are suitable.

2. *Grīṣma ṛtu* (summer): *Khāṭasītōdaka snāna* (bath in cold water of small ponds/wells), *Candanadrava upayōga* (water mixed with sandal wood), *Anilasēvana* (exposure to breeze -cold) are advised.

3. *Varṣā ṛtu* (rainy season): *Uṣṇōdakasnāna* (bath with hot water), *Ghanatōyaṁ na sēvana* (not bathing with rainy water), *Samayē ca samāhārī* (taking suitable food at appropriate time) are advised.

4. *Śarad ṛtu*: *Raudraṁ*, *Bhramaṇaṁ tatra varjayēt* - avoid anger, travelling and hot substances. *Khāṭasnāna* - bath in cold water of small ponds/wells, *Samāhārī* - suitable food in right time are advised.

5. *Hēmanta ṛtu* (winter): *Khāṭasnāna* - (bath in pond/wells), *vahniṁ ca sēvayēt* (use of heat to keep the body warm are advised).

6. *Śīsira ṛtu* (autumn): *Aṁśuka vahni* - limited use of heat to keep the body warm, *navōṣṇānnaṁ sēvana* - (warm food prepared freshly) *uṣṇōdaka snāna* (hot water bath) are advisable.

General instructions for healthy life

Do's

Premature aging can be avoided with the following: Consuming *sadyōmāṁsa* (fresh meat) *navānnaṁ* (fresh food), sex with only *bālā strī* (young women), *Kṣīrabhōjanam* (food with milk), *Sadā gṛta sēvana* (regular use of ghee), *Sadānnaṁ kṣutkālē* - eating wholesome food at right time (appetite is at its best), *Tṛṣṇāyām pīyatē jalam* (water intake when one is feels thirsty), *Nityam bhuktē ca tāmbūlam* (consuming betel leaf, nut regularly), *dadhi* (curds), *navanīta* (butter), *guḍa* (jaggery), and *saṁyamī* (poised life).

Dont's

To keep premature aging away one has to avoid the following: *Śuṣka mām̄sa* (dry meat), *vr̄ddhā strī* (coitus with old women), *Bālārka* (morning rising sun), *taruṇam̄ dadhi* (incompletely formed curds), *rātri dadhi sēvana* (curd intake during night meals), *rajasvalā*, (sex with a menstruating women), and with a *jāradūtikā* (sex worker).

Guidelines meant for food intake⁸

Brahmavaivartapurāṇa enumerates many guidelines regarding food intake which are meant to be followed by *Vaiṣṇava* devotees, which will keep the persons fit, and help them in spiritual progress some of them are: *haviṣya* (sacrificial food, esp. rice or other kinds of grain), for all categories of people, irrespective of age, class (*cāturvarṇa*), which is whole some and easy to digest. Any one should not consume with out offering it to God.

Specific days on which a person must observe fasting are

Ēkādaśī (the eleventh day of every fortnight of a lunar month), *Janmāṣṭamī*, *Rāmanavamī*, *Śivarātri*. Food items which allowed on these days : Persons who cannot tolerate strict fasting are given an option to consume the following food items: Fruits, roots, tubers, water, *haviṣya*, *prasāda* (food offered to deity) can be consumed.

Taking *Tāmbūla* (the leaf of piper-betel, which together with the areca-nut (*Areca catechu* Linn), catechu (*Acasia catechu* Linn), *Cunnam* (lime), and spices is usually chewed after meals) is forbidden for *yati* (an ascetic), a widow, and for student bachelor. Eating left out food, water, food that is not offer to *Śrī Hari* is not advisable to any one.

Food items which are not recommended for consumption periodically on specific days:

Vārtāka (*Solanum melongena* Linn) in *Kārtika māsa*, *Mūlaka* (*Raphanus sativus* Linn.) in *Māgha*, *Kalambī śāka* in *Cāturmāsa* (four months starting from *Āṣaḍha* to *Aśvayuja*), *Śvēta Tāla*, *Masūra* (*Phaseolus mungo* Linn), *matsya* (fish), are not advisable any time, *Kūṣmāṇḍa* (*Benincasa hispida* (Thunb.) Cogn) on *Pratipadā* (First day after full moon or new moon day), *Bṛhatī* (*Solanum indicum* Linn) *Dvīṭiyā* (Second day after full moon or new moon day), *Paṭōla* (*Trichosanthes dioioa* Roxb) on *Tṛtīyā* (Third day

of full moon or new moon day), *Mūlaka* (*Raphanus sativus* Linn) on *Caturthī* (Fourth day of full moon or new moon day), *Bilva* (*Aegle marmelos* Linn) *Pañcamī* (Fifth day of full moon or new moon day), *Nimbapatra* (*Azadirachta indica* A.juss) *Ṣaṣṭhī* (Sixth day of full moon or new moon day), *Tāla phala* (*Borassus flabellifer* Linn) on *Saptamī* (Seventh day of full moon or new moon day), *Nārikēla* (*Cocos nucifera*) *Aṣṭamī* (Eighth day of full moon or new moon day), *Laukī* (luffa) *Navamī* (Ninth day of full moon or new moon day), *Kālāmbikā śāka* on *Daśamī* (Tenth day of full moon or new moon day), *śimbī* (pulses) on *Ēkādaśī* (Eleventh day of full moon or new moon day), *Pūtikā* on *Dvādaśī* (Twelfth day of full moon or new moon day), *Vārtāka* (*Solanum melongena* Linn) on *Trayōdaśī* (Thirteenth day of full moon or new moon day). *Māṃsa* (meat) is not advisable for devotees.

Concept of *Viruddhāhāra*⁹

Āyurvēda considers *Viruddhāhāra* (incompatible combinations) as an important causative factors for disease and death. BVP has documented some of common incompatible combinations which are as follows:

Paya (milk), *siddhāna* (cooked food), *Madhu* (honey), *Guḍa* (jaggery), *Nārikēlōdaka* (coconut water), *phala* (fruits), *mūla* (roots), *dadhyanna* (curd rice) should never be kept in *Ayaskapātra* (iron vessel). *Tapta bhōjana* (burnt food), *Sauvīra* (putrified rice gruel) are not fit for consumption. *Nārikēlōdakaṃ* (coconut water) in *Kāṃsya* (bell-metal vessel), *Madhu* (honey) in *Tāmra pātra* (copper vessel), use of *Ārdraka* (ginger) with *Guḍa* (jaggery) is unhealthy. *Gavyaṃ* (Cow's) milk, *sarva madya* (all kinds of alcoholic beverages) in *Tāmra pātra* (copper vessel), *dugdha salavaṇa* (milk mixed with salt) and *sadya gōmāṃsa bhakṣaṇa* (recently cut meat of Cow) are considered as unwholesome and lead to morbidity. *Madhumīśrita ghr̥ta* (honey mixed with ghee), *Guḍa* (jaggery), *taila* (sesame oil), *Karpūra* (camphor) in a *Raupya pātra* (silver vessel) are not suitable for consumption. Eating three meals per day (two meals in day and one at night), eating left out food which is kept overnight, consuming milk, milk products along with sweets, honey, salt is unwholesome and damages health.

Code and conduct related to sexual life¹⁰

During the *Amāvasyā* (new moon day), *Purṇimā* (full moon day), *Saṅkrāntī*,

Caturdaśī (fourteenth day after full or new moon day), *Aṣṭamī* (eight day after full or new moon day), *Bhānuvāsara* (Sunday), *Śrāddha* (day meant for offering homage to demised elders), *Vrata* (day of performing specific rituals) sexual intercourse with any one including with one's spouse is forbidden. Sexual indulgence during daytime is forbidden for every one.

Tridōṣa vivēcana (information about three humours)¹¹

Tridōṣa (three humours) form the basic premise for description of human body, disease and health in *Āyurvēda*. In tune with this philosophy BVP also has documented the following information about three humours. Here the order in which the content is explained in the original text has been reproduced as it is.

Pitta prakōpa (excitation of Pitta)

In absence of food (*āhārābhāva*), when a person is hungry (*kṣudhā*) with aggravated digestive fire (*jvajvalyamāna agni*), stimulates *Maṇipūra cakra* (plexus) and results in excitation of *pitta*. (*Prāṇinām jāyatē pittam cakrē ca maṇipūrakē*).

Causes for Pitta prakōpa (excitation of Pitta)

Tāḍa (*Borassus flabellifer* Linn) fruit, *Bilvaphala* (*Aegle marmelos* Corr.) followed by immediate intake of water increases *pitta* which in turn leads to instant death. *Taptōdakam* in *Grīṣma ṛtu* (consuming hot water in summer) *tikta bhōjana* (intake of bitter food) in *Bhādrapada* (*Bhādra* month-rainy season) leads to *Pitta prakōpa* (excitation of *pitta*).

Treatment for Pitta prakōpa (excitation of Pitta)

Ground *Dhānyaka* (*Coriandrum sativum* Linn.) Coriander seeds with *Śarkarā* (sugar) and *Śītōdaka* (cold water) subsides *Pitta*. *Caṇaka* (*Cicer arietinum* Linn.), *Sarvagavya* (Milk and milk products) except *Dadhi*, *Takra* (curd, buttermilk) use of *Pakva Bilva*, *Tālaka phala* (*Aegle marmelos* Corr.) and *Tāla* (*Borassus flabellifer* Linn) fruit, *Ārdraka* (*Zingiber officinale* Rosc), *Mudgayūsa* (soup of green gram), *Tilapiṣṭa* (paste of sesame seeds) with *Śarkarā* (sugar).

Ślēsma prakōpa (causes that excite Ślēsma)

Bhōjanānantara snāna (taking bath immediately after food intake), *jalapāna* (water

intake in absence of (*Tṛṣā*) thirst), *Tilataila*, *Snigdha taila* (use of gingelly oil in excess), *Snigdha Āmalakī drava* (use of fresh sour Emblica officinalis Linn. fruit juice), *paryuṣitāna* (intake of stale food / food, stored over night), *Pakva Rambhāphala* (ripe Musa paradisiaca Linn), *Dadhi* (curd), *Mēghāmbu* (rain water), *Śarkarātōya* (sugar mixed water), *Susnigdhajala sēvana* (sticky, thick, polluted water) intake increases *Ślēṣmā*.

Nārikēlōdakam (fresh/tender coconut water), bath with *paryuṣita jala* (water kept overnight), *Taru Guñjā pakva phala* (ripe *guñjā* -Abrus precatorius Linn) fruit, *Supakva Karkaṭa phala* (ripe Carica papaya Linn), *Khāṭasnāna in Varṣā ṛtu* (bathing with pond/well water in rainy season), *Mūlaka* (Raphanus sativus Linn) eating excite *Ślēṣmā*.

Samprāpti

Exited/aggravated *Ślēṣmā* begins its effects from head (*Brahmarandhrē ca tajjanma*) and results in destruction of vitality, virility (*Mahadvīryam vināśanam*).

Substances, which alleviate Ślēṣmā

Vahnivēda (external application of heat), *Bhraṣṭa Bhaṅgapakva taila* (heated oil), *bhramaṇa* (walking), *śuṣka bhakṣya* (dry food), *Śuṣka Pakva Haritakī* (dry ripe Terminalia chebula Retz., fruit), *Apakva Piṇḍāraka* (Unripe pindaraka fruit), *Apakva Rambhāphalam* (unripe Musa paradisiaca Linn), *Vēśavāra* (Hot boiled meat), *Sindhuvāra* (*Vitex negundo* Linn), *Anāhāra* (not taking food), *Apānaka* (not taking water), *Saghṛtaṁ Rōcanācūrṇam* (rochana powder with ghee), *Saghṛta Śuṣkaśarkarā* (Ghee with sugar) *Marica* (*Piper nigrum* Linn), *Pippalī* (*Piper longum* Linn), *Suṣka Ādraka* (*Zingiber officinale* Rosc.), *Jivaka* (*Microstylis wallichii* Lindl), *Madhu* (Honey), *Gāndharvī Ēraṇḍa* (*Ricinus communis* Linn).

Vāta prakōpa kāraṇa

Bhōjanānantara sadyōgamana dhāvana (walking or running immediately after food intake), *vahnitāpa* (exposure to heat), *śāśvaddhamana maithuna* (coitus with old animals), *vṛddhā strī gamana* (sexual indulgence with old women), *manaḥ santāpa* (mental agony / distress), *atirukṣamanāhāram* (consuming very dry food), *yuddha* (war), *kalaha* (conflict), *kaṭuvākya* (harsh words), *bhaya* (fear), *sōka* (sorrow).

Samprāpti

Vāta when excited, manifests its actions from *Ājñā cakra*.

Vāta alleviating substances

Pakva Rambhāphala (ripe banana- *Musa paradisiaca* Linn), *Sabjāṃ Śarkarōdakaṃ* (sugar mixed water), *Nārikēlōdakaṃ* (coconut water), *Sadya Takra* (fresh buttermilk), *Supiṣṭaka Māhiṣa Dadhi* (fresh buffalo curd with sugar), *Sadya Paryuṣitānnam* (food kept over night which is not stale), *Śītōdaka* (cold water), *Pakva taila viśēṣa* (well cooked oily food), *Kēvala Tila taila* (only Sesame oil), *Lāṅgalī* (*Gloriosa superba* Linn), *Tāla* (*Borassus flabellifer* Linn), *Kharjūra* (*Phoenix dactylifera* Linn.) fruit. *Śītala Uṣṇōdaka snāna* (bath with cold and hot water), *Susnigdha Candana drava* (use of water mixed with sandal wood paste), *Snigdha Padmapatralpa susnigdha vyañjanāni* (smooth, oily lotus flowers, leaves, couch, and foods *alleviate vāta*).

Sinful conduct and disease and their solution ¹²

Rōgī kukarmaṇā jīvaśca rōgī śubhakarmaṇā.

Dīrghajīvī ca kṣīṇāyuh sukhī duḥkhī ca niścitam. (2.20/21-26)

Brahmavaivartapurāṇa attributes *pāpa* (sinful conduct) as the main cause for disease and death. The solution for this menace is *svadharmācaraṇa* (following one's own duty), *Harisēvana* (staying in service of lord *Hari*), *Gurudēva tīrtha sēvana* (engaging in service of teachers, gods, and pilgrimages), *vrata* (following act of vow-determination), *upavāsa* (practice fasting with an intention to stay near to divinity) etc., will help a person to nullify the effects of Sinful conduct.

Jvara (fever), morbidity and death

Jvara (fever) is considered as *Durvāra* (Most dreaded) of all diseases, incurable and producer of all other illness. The preceding deity of fever is *Śivabhakta* (a devotee of *Śiva*), he is a saint *Yōgī* (practitioner of *Yōga*), *Niṣṭhura* (harsh in nature), *Vikṛtā kṛti* (has ugly form) *Bhīma* (he is terrific), *tripāda* (has three legs), *triśīrā* (three heads), *ṣaḍbhujā* (six arms) and *navalōcana* (nine eyes). He is *Bhasmapraharāṇa* (strikes with ash), *Raudra* (is fierce), *Yamōpama* (like death god), and he is *Kālāntaka* (like end of time- destruction of universe-dissolution).

Fever on its own results in *Mandāgnījanaka* (makes digestive fire mild) and fever is caused by *Mandāgni* (mild digestive fire). In turn mild digestive fire results from three causative factors known as three vitiating humours *Pitta*, *Ślēṣmā*, *Samīra* (*Vāta*).

Types of *Jvara*

Four types of *Jvara* are mentioned in BVP they are: fever due to vitiated *Vāta-Vāyuja*, vitiated *Pitta-Pittaja*, vitiated *Kapha -Ślēṣmaja*, composite of all the *dōṣa-Tridōṣaja Jvara*.

List of other diseases mentioned

Pāṇḍu (anaemia), *Kāmalā* (jaundice), *Kuṣṭha* (leprosy and skin conditions), *Śōtha* (Dropsy), *Plīhā* (splenomegaly), *Śulaka* (colicky pain), *Jvara* (fever), *Atisāra* (diarrhoea), *Grahaṇī* (mal absorption), *Kāsa* (cough), *Vraṇa* (wound), *Halīmaka* (cirrhotic liver), *Mūtrakṛcchra* (dysuria), *Gulma* (tumour), *Raktadōṣa vikāra* (diseases of vitiated blood), *Viṣa* (poison), *Mēha* (polyuria), *Kabja* (constipation), *Gaṇḍa*, *Galagaṇḍaka* (goitre), *Bhrama* (giddiness, dizziness), *Sannipāta*, *Viṣūcikā* (cholera), *Dāruṇī* (dandruff)

Total number of diseases enumerated are : 64 with permutations and combinations of above mentioned diseases. All these diseases are depicted as daughters of *mṛtyukanyā* (death), and *jarā* (old age) as their sibling.

Other information available pertaining to *Āyurvēda* and health

Legend / story of *Tulasī* (*Ocimum sanctum*) plant and its importance¹³

The *Tulasī* (also known as *Tulasī*) plant or Holy Basil (*Ocimum tenuiflorum*) is an important symbol in many Hindu religious traditions. The name “*Tulasī*” means “the incomparable one”. *Tulasī* is a venerated plant and devotees worship it in the morning and evening. *Tulasī* grows wild in the tropics and warm regions

According to the description available in BVP *Tulasī* plant came into existence from the hair of *Tulasī*, wife of *Śankhacūḍa* as a solicitation bestowed upon her by lord *Viṣṇu*. Her body after her demise transformed into a river called as *Gaṇḍakī* where lord *Viṣṇu* himself takes the shape of *Śāligrāma* (stone), which is offered with *Tulasī* leaves with great respect and devotion by all *vaiṣṇava* devotees. The plant is considered as an important medicinal plant in *Āyurvēda* even today.

The *Aṣṭamīvrata pūjā-upavāsa*¹⁴

Janmāṣṭamī is birthday of Lord *Śrīkr̥ṣṇa*, and *Brahmavaivartapurāṇa* glorifies his story to a great extent. *Aṣṭamīvrata* is performed on Lord *Kṛ̥ṣṇa* birthday, this *vrata* assumes a great importance as this comes in the midst of *Varṣā ṛtu* (*Śrāvāṇa*-rainy season) which is considered as a vulnerable season for health. Some of the ingredients which have health benefits used in this *pūjā* are: *Madhuparka* (*madhu*-honey, *Ghṛta*-ghee, *dadhi*-curd, *dugdha*-milk, *śarkarā*-sugar) used for bathing the idol is a very nutritious and provides instant energy when consumed. *Candana* (*Santalum album* Linn.), *Kastūrī* (*musk*), *Agaru* (*Aquilaria agallocha* Roxb.) are used in *arghya* (a respectful offering or oblation to a god or venerable person). *Viṣṇu taila*, *Āmalakī* (*Emblica officinalis* Gaertn.) for *snāna* (bathing) and *Kastūrī* (*musk*) also offered as *gandha* (a sectarian mark on the forehead). The *Tāmbūla* (betle leaf quid) with *Karpūra* (*camphor*) and *Candana*, *Agaru*, *Kastūrī*, *Kuṅkuma* (Saffron) for *Anulēpa* (unction; ointment). *Upavāsa* (staying near, a fast, kindling a sacred fire), *Jāgaraṇa* (sitting up at night as a part of a religious ceremony) are considered as most auspicious and very important ritual of *Janmāṣṭamī*. These two activities assume great significance as the season is prone for more natural calamities and the people are kept vigilant by following these rituals.

Dhanvantari prādurbhāva (Story of *Dhanvantari*)¹⁵

Śrīkr̥ṣṇa uvāca.

Nārāyaṇāṁśō bhagavānsvayaṁ dhanvantarirmahān.

Purā samudramathanē samutthasthau mahōdadhēh.

Sarvavēdēṣu niṣṇātō mantratantraviśāradaḥ.

Śiṣyō hi vainatēyasya śaṅkarasyōpaśiṣyakaḥ. (4/51/1-2)

Dhanvantari has great relevance in *Āyurvēda*. BVP has direct reference of the origin of him (from *samudra manthana*-churning of the ocean). It described him as desciple of *Garuḍa*, considered to be a learned man of *Vēda* and *mantra tantra*.

Manasādēvī and *Dhanvantari*

A legend of BVP describes in detail the war between *Dhanvantari* and *Manasādēvī*, wife of the *Nāga King Vāsukī*, which ultimately ended in peace with the intervention of lord *Brahma* and *Mahādēva*. In this context Lord *Dhanvantari* prays *Manasādēvī*, who later became revered Goddess who has a temple by her name in Haridwar till today.

Goddess *Manasādēvī* was born from her - Saint *Kaśyapa*'s, mind and therefore became famous by the name '*Manasādēvī*'. '*Manasā*' also means wishes and therefore also known as the Goddess fulfilling the wishes of the devotees visiting her temple.

Discussion & conclusion:

Purāṇa are popular encyclopedic works of ancient and medieval Hindu religion, philosophy, history, politics, ethics, sciences etc. They rationalized and simplified the various literatures for the better understanding of common man, who is unable to understand them in their original form. Hence *purāṇas* are not only mere mythological or religious stories, but are also the reliable sources to establish ancient Indian heritage, which is valuable and appropriate with the present scientific era.

Medicine is a part and parcel of human life from the beginning of this race. *Purāṇas* irrespective of their chronology have documented the information related to human body composition, aspects of *Prakṛti* (nature), *dōṣa-dūṣya vivēcana*, daily routine, seasonal routine, ethical and moral conduct, food substances, drugs, diseases at various contexts.

BVP is considered as a *Vaiṣṇava purāṇa* and the guidelines pertaining to health care are meant for the preventive and promotive health of its followers. Majority of text describes aspects of social and preventive medicine which is the first step in any health care system. Though an elaborate description of *Jvara*, three *dōṣa* and a list of diseases has been enumerated, there is not much description available with respect to the treatment aspect which does not form the premise of the book.

Other salient aspects of BVP with respect to *Āyurvēda* are description of history of *Tulasī* plant, *Dhanvantari* and their spiritual importance.

Brahmavaivartapurāṇa imparts the knowledge of health care as an integral part of religious life and stands as a fine example of blend of science and philosophy in practice. The book stands as testimony of a Vaishnavite devotee's life ensuring his/her health and spiritual growth. Review of this book with reference to its Ayurvedic content reinforces the claim that it is indeed a *Mahāpurāṇa* touching all spheres of human life.

REFERENCES

- 1 Shastri, J.L. 1983 *Brahmavaivartapurāṇa* Part I, index & Introduction by Satkari Mukhopadhyaya, 1st Edition, Motilal Banarasidas; New Delhi, p.IX – XIV
- 2 Sushil Kumar, D. 1961 Early history of the Vaishnava Faith and Movement in Bengal, 2nd. ed., Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyaya, Calcutta, p. 11-12.
- 3 Shastri, J.L. 1983 *Brahmavaivartapurāṇa* Part I, 1st Edition, Motilal Banarasidas New Delhi. p. 25
- 4 Ibid 1983 Pp. 47
- 5 Ibid 1983 Pp. 26
- 6 Ibid 1983 Pp. 39
- 7 Ibid 1983 Pp. 26
- 8 Ibid 1983 Pp. 42
- 9 Ibid 1983 Pp. 195
- 10 Ibid 1983 Pp. 43
- 11 Ibid 1983 Pp. 27
- 12 Ibid 1983 Pp. 26
- 13 Anonymous *Saṅkṣipta Brahmavaivartapurāṇa* Hindi 6th edition., (reprint) Geeta press Gorakhpur – 273005 p.163
- 14 Anonymous *Saṅkṣipta Brahmavaivartapurāṇa* Hindi 6th edition., (reprint) Geeta press Gorakhpur – 273005 p.436
- 15 Shastri, J.L. 1983 *Brahmavaivartapurāṇa* Part I, 1st Edition, Motilal Banarasidass New Delhi. p. 137

सारांश

ब्रह्मवैवर्त पुराण में आयुर्वेद पर एक रोचक अध्याय

सुभोस वाराणसी, टी. साकेतराम, विनोद कुमार भटनागर,
अला नारायण एवं एम.एम. राव

पुराणों का अध्ययन वैदिक ज्ञान प्राप्त करने हेतु लाभदायक है। परम्परावादियों ने पुराण शब्द का अर्थ पौराणिक ग्रन्थों जैसे मत्स्य पुराण, कूर्म पुराण आदि से किया है एवं इनको महान् सम्मानीय अधिकार प्रदान किया है। इनको प्राचीन ज्ञान के भण्डार के रूप में स्वीकार किया है क्योंकि इनको बृहदारण्यक उपनिषद् में उल्लिखित किया गया है। ब्रह्मवैवर्त पुराण को पुराणों की पारम्परिक सूची में दसवें स्थान पर सम्मिलित किया गया है।

ब्रह्मवैवर्त पुराण चार खण्डों एव २७६ अध्यायों में विभक्त है। ब्रह्म खण्ड में ३० अध्याय, प्रकृति खण्ड में ६७ अध्याय, गणपति खण्ड में ४६ अध्याय और श्रीकृष्णजन्म खण्ड में १३३ अध्याय हैं। ब्रह्मवैवर्त पुराण के अनुसार इसमें १८००० श्लोकों का उल्लेख है परन्तु उपलब्ध प्रति में २०५०० श्लोक उपलब्ध है। विस्तृत ब्रह्मवैवर्त पुराण में प्राचीन और मध्यकालीन विषयों का संग्रह मिलता है।