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VIṢṆUDHARMOTTARA

THE  
VĀYU PURĀNA

PART I

TRANSLATED AND ANNOTATED BY

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The purest gems lie hidden in the bottom of the ocean or in the depth of rocks. One has to dive into the ocean or delve into the rocks to find them out. Similarly, truth lies concealed in the language which with the passage of time has become obsolete. Man has to learn that language before he discovers that truth.

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## CONTENTS

PREFACE	vii
ABBREVIATIONS	xiii
INTRODUCTION	xv
CHAPTERS	
1. Summary of Contents	1
2. A Sacrificial Session of Twelve Years	22
3. Origin of Creation	26
4. Origin of Creation (continued)	29
5.       "                       "	37
6.       "                       "	42
7. Transition between two Yugas (Ages)	51
8. Four Stages of Life	58
9. Creation of Devas and Others	76
10. Manvantaras	86
11. Pāśupata Yoga	93
12. Evil Portents and Calamities in Yoga	98
13. Supreme Powers of Yoga	102
14. Pāśupata Yoga	104
15.       "                       (continued)	108
16. Purity and Conduct of Life	110
17. Attainment of the Ultimate State of Life	112
18. Procedure of Expiation for Recluses (Sannyāsins)	113
19. Evil Omens Foreboding Death	116
20. The Characteristics of Attainment of Omkāra	119
21. Review of Kalpas	123
22. Number of Kalpas	130

35. He (Vāyu) was a disciple of Brahmā. He could see everything directly. He had perfect control over his senses. He was endowed with the eight supernatural powers like *Aṇimā* and others.

36. He sustains all the worlds with their special characteristics of the non-human (and human) species. He perpetually flows through his seven courses (regions) as arranged.

37. The forty-nine Maruts arranged in seven groups of seven were stationed invariably in his jurisdiction. He is very powerful who could make the assemblage of three kinds of living beings. He could make embodied beings sustain through Tejas (fire).

38. He sustains bodies of living beings urging them with his five-fold activities and through the organs of sensation and activity.

39. It has been said by the learned that his source of origin was ether, attributes were sound and touch and that he was the origin of fire.

40. Lord Vāyu is the extremely active presiding deity called Vātāraṇi. He was expert in the science of language.

41. He was adept in ancient (Purāṇa) tradition. By means of sweet words full of Purāṇic contents he could delight the learned sages.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### *Origin of Creation*

*Sūta said :*

1. Obeisance to the great God (Śiva) of supreme power and activity, the prominent one among gods, whose intelligence and brilliance is immeasurable. Salute to him of the brilliance of thousands of suns and fire. Hail to the creator and annihilator of the universe !

2-5. I shall narrate the story that wards off the evil of the Kali age, after bowing to the Prajāpatis bowed to by all the world, to great Lords like the self-born god Brahmā, Rudra and other deities, (to) Bhṛgu, Marīci, Parameṣṭhin, Manu, (to) Rajas, Tamas (and Sattva), to Dharma, Kaśyapa, Vasiṣṭha, Dakṣa, Atri, Pulastya, Kardama, Ruci, Vivasvat, Kratu, (to) the Patriarch sage Aṅgiras, Pulaha, Cukrodhana and the group of twenty-one ordered to carry out their duty of increasing the subjects (human beings) and to those ancient, eternal sages who are accompanied by their attendants.<sup>1</sup> I bow to the sages, the leaders of whom are Bṛhaspati and Uśanas who shine by their firmness and fortitude. I bow to those merciful sages of auspicious conduct and penance.

6. I shall describe the excellent creation of Prajāpati (God Brahmā) embellished by Indra, gods, and the sages. It is auspicious, incomparable, sinless and pleasing to the sages and the patriarchs (Prajāpatis) of great splendour.<sup>2</sup>

7. The (Purāṇa) story proclaimed by the Wind-god is greater than the greatest. It describes the period from the beginning of god Brahmā's day; it describes the sages who have amply and distinctly manifested the glory of their manliness and splendour. It is spread (incorporated) in the Vedas and Smṛtis and illustrated (therein) as well.

8. It is highly delightful to the mind due to the precise construction of compounds and (the use of) appropriate variety of words. Herein is described the first activity of unmanifest nature prompted by lord Śiva.

9-10. What is mentioned as the incomprehensible cause is Brahman which is the source of origin of the Prakṛti. The individual unit is a synthesis of Ātman, the cavity of the heart, womb, eye and the body. It is immortal and imperishable. The semen comprises the sattvaguṇa, penance and is very bright. That incomprehensible eternal second Puruṣa is pervaded by Brahmā, the grandfather of the worlds.

1. A. adds : *Manūṃśca sarvān akhilān avasthitān*  
"To all the Manus present".

2. A. adds : *Viśuddha-vāg-buddhi-sarīra-tejasām*  
"Of extremely pure speech, intellect and bodily splendour".

11. By the mere mental conception of the great lord, Prakṛti gives birth to the eight causes for increasing the continuity of creation and to the predetermined changes in the personal soul, it (i.e. Prakṛti) being the procreator, the possessor of Rajas in abundance, bound by the cosmic time and the limits prescribed by the Vedas. (?)

12-14. (The Purāṇa describes the creation of) the Devas, Asuras, mountains, trees, oceans,<sup>1</sup> Manus, Patriarchs (Prajāpatis), sages, Pitṛs, twice-born castes, Piśācas, Yakṣas, Nāgas, Rākṣasas, stars, planets, constellations of stars, the sun, the night-prowling demons, months, seasons, years, nights, days, space, time, Yugas, *Ayanas*, medicinal and forest herbs, creepers, aquatic beings, Apsaras-s, animals, lightning, rivers, clouds, birds etc. In fact whatever is subtle, whatever is on the earth, whatever is stationed in the sky, whatever is mobile or immobile, whatever has motion and division (is mentioned in this Purāṇa).

15. The science of the Vedas—Ṛk, Yajus, Sāman, the Soma juice, the sacrifice—whatever is made use of and desired by Prajāpati has been mentioned.

16. (So also is described) The creation of those before that of Vaivasvata Manu—the birth of those pious ones who are bowed to by the three worlds such as the lords of gods, celestial sages, Manus and prominently intelligent (persons) who have filled in (populated) and embellished the three worlds.

17. The rebirth of Dakṣa in the world of mortals by the curse of Rudra; his residence on the Earth and the mutual curse of Śiva and Dakṣa<sup>2</sup> (are mentioned).

18. The revolutions of Manvantaras, the creation and dissolution of the Yugas, sages and their lineage as these happened in the primeval Yugas and would occur onward—All this is described here (in this Purāṇa).

19. Those Vyāsas who propagate the Vedas in the Dvāpara Yugas are serially described. So also the number of Kalpas, worlds and the days of Brahmā (are mentioned).

1. A. adds : *Gandharva-yakṣoraga-mānuṣāṇām*

'Of Gandharvas, Yakṣas, Nāgas or reptiles and human beings'.

2. *Infra* Ch. 30. 56-67.

20. The extent of four-fold living beings, viz., birds, trees, the sweat-born insects, and animals as also of the pious heaven-dwellers, and of those who have gone to hell. Their extent is given by inference.

21. The three types of dissolution, viz. absolute, of Prakṛti (primordial nature) and periodical as also the bondage and liberation and particularly the way of worldly existence and the higher way are mentioned.

22. The position of the causes remaining in the state of Prakṛti (material cause) and their subsequent functioning, have been expounded to the sages through arguments and on the authority of sacred scriptures. O Brāhmaṇas, whatever was fully narrated factually is being recounted to you exactly. Please listen.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### *Origin of Creation (continued)*

1. On hearing that, all the sages of the Naimiṣa forest replied to Sūta with eyes excited with curiosity.

2. "You, sir, are an expert in the knowledge of different dynasties and families as you have inherited it directly from Vyāsa. Hence, please describe to us entirely the creation (etc.) of this world.

3. We wish to know the detailed '*who's who*' (lit. the genealogies) of them all, and also the diverse creation of the ancient sages, as also the primeval creation of Prajāpati".

4. On being repeatedly requested by them the noble-souled Lomahaṣaṇa, the most excellent among the good, narrated everything in detail and in due order.

*Lomahaṣaṇa said :*

5. The story that you have asked me to narrate is divine, charming, meaningful and destructive of sins. What is being

related by me is wonderful, full of deep meaning and in consonance with the Vedas.

6-7. He who retains this in memory, or listens to it constantly or narrates it to Brāhmaṇas and to recluses in particular, with pious mind and self-restraint, on festive occasions (or important lunar days) in holy centres and temples, enjoys a long life. By proclaiming this Purāṇa, he upholds his family and is honoured in the heaven.

8. Understand as the Purāṇa consisting of extensive sections is being recited by me word by word as it was heard (by me). It will increase the fame of you all.

9. The glorification of all meritorious persons of well-established fame is conducive to wealth, reputation, heavenly pleasure, destruction of foes and longevity.

10. Creation (of the universe, its) dissolution and re-creation, genealogy of kings, Manvantaras and the description of the families of sages—these five constitute the characteristics of a Purāṇa.<sup>1</sup>

11. I shall (now) recount in details the Purāṇa that was narrated by the Wind-god and is on a par with the Vedas. (I shall narrate the traditional history of) the Kalpa which is purer than any other Kalpas and is positively purer than other holy things.

12. The first section (*pāda*) called *Prakriyā* consists of the following : The Origin, dissolution, re-creation and sustenance of the world.

13. The other sections constitute the Introductory (*Upodghāta*), *Anuṣaṅga* (the central) and *Upasamhāra* (the conclusion). The Purāṇa is conducive to virtue, fame and longevity. It dispels all sins.

1. This verse enumerating the five characteristics of a Purāṇa is common to most Purāṇas, e.g. A. P. 1-14, Bd. P. I. 1.37b-38, Bs. P. I. 2. 4-5, Bv. P. IV. 133. 6, GP. I. 215. 14, KP. I. 1. 12, SK. P. VII. 2. 84 and others. Amara Siṃha (5th cent. A. D.) has recorded this verse in *Amara Kośa* I. 6. 5. But "The Purāṇa Texts that have come down to us hardly conform to this definition" (*The Hist. and Culture of the Indian People*, Vol. III, p. 292). For the application of this definition to the present text *vide* Introduction.

14. Thus the four sections<sup>1</sup> are briefly mentioned by me. I shall describe these in detail in due order.

15-16. After making obeisance to the self-born god Brahmā, Hiraṇyagarbha (a golden-fetus, born of golden egg), who is the lord, is the first and the last Puruṣa, who is the distinguished and superior Ātman of the subjects and who governs the worlds, I shall relate in details the excellent creation without leaving anything in doubt. The creation starts with the principle of *Mahat* and ends with *Viśeṣa* (the gross body).<sup>2</sup> It is described in diversity of forms and characteristics with the five dimensions and six (dividing?) systems. It is presided over by Puruṣa.

17. The unmanifest primary cause is of the nature of *Sat* (existent) and *Asat* (non-existent). It is eternal. Those who meditate on the Reality call it *Pradhāna* and *Prakṛti*.

18. It is devoid of smell, colour, taste, sound and touch. It is unborn, steady, imperishable, eternal and stationed in its own Ātman.

19. It is the origin of the universe. It is the great Being, the great Brahman, the eternal. It is unmanifest and is indeed the extension of all elements.

20. It is beginningless, endless, unborn, subtle, possessed of three attributes. It is the source and the immutable one. This timeless (lit. not belonging to the present), incomprehensible, Brahman was in the beginning.

1. The division of Purāṇa texts into four Pādas (as in vv. 12-14.) viz. : (1) *Prakriyā*, (2) *Anuṣaṅga*, (3) *Upodghāta* and (4) *Upasamhāra* is older than the *Pañca-lakṣaṇa* definition. Bd. P. is also divided into similar Pādas.

2. Purāṇas have accepted the Sāṅkhya theory of the evolution of the universe. Compare the evolution as given in AP. 17. 2-16, Bd. P. I.13.5ff, Bh. P. III.20.12-53, KP.I.2.3ff, VP. I.3.1-45. *Mahādāyam viśeṣāntam* is another common expression to state the evolution in a nutshell.

In this expression *Viśeṣa* indicates the differentiation amongst the five elements on the grossest plane of matter (*vide* V. S. Agrawala, *Mt.P.—A Study*, pp. 41-43). See vv. 61-62 below.

The Sāṅkhya in this text is influenced by Vedānta; see the description the Brahman in vv. 18-20 below.

21-22. All this universe which was enveloped in darkness, was pervaded by the Ātman when the Guṇas were in equilibrium. But at the time of creation Tamas reached a subsidiary state. The principle of *Mahat* appeared, due to the subsidiary state of Pradhāna, since it was presided over by the individual soul.

23. It was enveloped by the subtle and unmanifest principle of *Mahat*, which when Sattva becomes predominant, illuminates only Sattva. The mind should be understood as the *Mahat* because the mind is its cause.

24. It is born of the subtle mind, presided over by the intelligent consciousness. Dharma etc. and their various forms are the causes of the ingredients of creation. When urged by desire to create, the principle of *Mahat* performs the creation.

25. The terms *Manas*, *Mahat*, *Mati*, *Brahma*, *Pūḥ*, *Buddhi*, *Khyāti*, *Īsvara*, *Prajñā*, *Citi*, *Smṛti*, *Samvit*, and *Vipura* are synonymous,<sup>1</sup> so say the learned people.

26. Since it conceives of the fruit of the activities that multiply in a subtle way, it is called *Manas*.

27. It is termed as *Mahat* because it is born ahead of all the principles and is greater in dimension than other principles and attributes.

28. It is called *Mati* because it bears (comprehends) the measure, thinks of the division and is considered to be the *Puruṣa* in view of its relationship in enjoyment.

29. It is (etymologically) designated as *Brahman* because of its bigness and because it creates the beings and lifts them up from their resting place, the cosmic water.

30. It is called *Pūḥ* because it fills all the bodies by conferring benefits and makes them endowed with predetermined elements.

31. It is called *Buddhi* because through this principle, *Puruṣa* discriminates between the wholesome and the unwholesome and makes him advise others too.

1. This tendency towards synthesis or *Samanvaya* of different schools of thought is found in other Purāṇas irrespective of their classification as Śaiva or Vaiṣṇava. The etymologies of these terms in vv. 26-39 are populist.

32. It is called *Khyāti* because re-enjoyment is felt in the awareness of this principle when (real) enjoyment is based on knowledge.

33. It is proclaimed by its attributes and is known by different names. Hence *Khyāti* has been the epithet of *Mahat*.

34. Since it knows everything directly, it is called the noble-souled *Īsvara*. It is called *Prajñā* because organs of perception are born of it.

35. It is called *Citi* because it collects the forms, knowledge etc. and the fruits of sacrificial rites for enjoyment.

36. It is declared as *Smṛti* because it is mindful of all activities and affects present, past and future.

37. It is called *Samvit* (derived either from  $\sqrt{vid}$  or  $\sqrt{vind}$ ) as it obtains complete knowledge and hence its greatness.

38. It exists in everything and everything exists in it. Hence it is termed as *Samvit* by the ones possessing higher intelligence.

39. That receptacle of knowledge, (the omniscient) lord, proclaimed that knowledge arises from knowledge. *Mahat* is called *Vipura* by the learned because the *Dvandvas* (mutually clashing pairs) are covered by it.

40. Because of its being absolute controller of all worlds, it is called *Īsvara*. It is called *Brahman* because of its bigness. It is *Bhava* because of its existence.

41. It is called *Ka* (Prajāpati) because of its knowledge of the physical body and of the soul also, due to its being absolutely one. It is *Puruṣa* because it lies in the body. It is *Svayambhū* because it is self-born and because it exists from the beginning.

42. The first excellent *Tattova* (*Mahat*) has been thus explained through synonymous words by the knowers of truth and those who meditate on reality.

43. Urged by the desire for creation, *Mahat* performs creation. Its two-fold activities are conception and exertion.

44. Dharma and other principles are the ingredients of creation. *Mahat* is three-fold by virtue of the three *guṇas*, viz. *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*.

45. From *Mahat* of threefold *Guṇas*, is born Ego when the *rajoguna* is predominant. The creation of Ego is secondary and is enveloped by *Mahat*.

46. Thereafter, when the (cosmic) Ego is dominated by *tamas-guṇa*, the primary subtle element is born of the Ego characterized by *tamas*.

47. Ether is a perforated (void) extensive expanse and is characterized by the subtle element called sound and is again enveloped by the cosmic Ego (*Bhūtādi*).

48. It is reported that ether characterised by the subtle element sound created the subtle element touch. The Ego undergoing a change created the subtle element sound.

49. Wind grows powerful and is regarded as having the quality of touch. The powerful air is born of the subtle element of touch. Ether characterised by its subtle element of sound enveloped the subtle element of touch.

50. Water (consisting) of the subtle element of taste is enveloped by the subtle element of colour. Water effecting a change in the subtle element of taste created the subtle element of smell.

51. Formation of components takes place from that quality. With its particular 'smell', water with its subtle element of taste covered (the earth) consisting of the subtle element of smell.

52. The subtle elements are so called because they have specialities. This is their special characteristic. They are also called *Aviśeṣas* because they express non-distinguishing characters. They are further called *Aviśeṣas* because they are non-quiet, non-vehement and non-intelligent.

53. This creation of gross and subtle elements should be known (on the basis) of reciprocal activities. From the *Vaikārika* type of ego which is generated by *Sattva guṇa* and is *sāttvika* by nature, the *Vaikārika* type of creation simultaneously takes place.

54. The five organs of knowledge and the five organs of action constitute the ten efficient organs. These constitute ten (presiding) deities. The eleventh is mind. (Thus) the *Vaikārika* gods are eleven (in number).

55. Ear, skin, eye, tongue and the fifth nose are the cognitive organs for knowing sound etc.

56. Legs, anus, organ of generation, hands and the tenth organ speech are the organs of action. Their functions are movement, evacuation, pleasure seeking, manual work and speech.

57. Ether, the subtle element of which is sound, penetrates the subtle element of touch. Therefore, air consists of two attributes: sound and touch.

58. When the two attributes, viz. sound and touch penetrate the quality, 'colour', fire becomes endowed with three attributes, viz. sound, touch and colour.

59. Along with the (qualities) of sound, touch and colour it penetrated the subtle element of taste. Therefrom water characterised by taste should be known to possess four attributes.

60. The subtle element of smell entered them along with sound, touch and colour. Then (water) in conjunction with the subtle element of smell produces earth. Among all gross elements, earth alone possesses five attributes.

61. The gross elements are called *Viśeṣas* because they are quiescent, terrific and non-intelligent. These sustain one another because they penetrate one another.

62. Within earth is this entire cosmos surrounded firmly by *Lokāloka*. The *Viśeṣas* are perceivable by the sense organs and are limited (as they are fixed and determined).

63. The later elements attain the attributes of the former ones. Whatever characteristic is retained for a particular period is called *guṇa* (quality) for that period.

64. Having sensed smell from fire, some, out of ignorance, (may believe it) as emanating from air. It should be known that it (smell) is only in earth (i.e. it is the exclusive quality of earth). And they (the particles of earth) take resort to (i.e. are found in) air (hence its smell).

65-66. These seven extremely powerful but disparate elements were unable to create the subjects (beings) separately, without all of them being conjoined. When those great-souled (powerful) ones beginning with *Mahat* and ending with *Viśeṣas*

come together, they are presided over by Puruṣa and with the blessing of the unmanifest, they create the cosmic egg.

67. Like a bubble out of water, the egg was born (suddenly) all at a time from *Viśeṣas*. What was the vast mass of water therein performed the work of Brahmā.

68. The *Kṣetrajña* designated as Brahmā (the cosmic principle of activity) woke up in the egg of Prakṛti. He is verily the first embodied being. He is called Puruṣa.

69. He is the first creator of living beings. He existed in the very beginning manifesting himself as the four-faced Hiranyagarbha. In the primary and the secondary creation, the *Kṣetrajña* is termed Brahmā.

70. Living beings are created along with the sense-organs which they give up at the time of dissolution. Living beings resort to bodies again in the transitional periods characterized by non-aggregation.

71. The golden Meru is the foetus of that great-souled one. The oceans constitute the embryonic liquid and the mountains, the embryonic membrane and the bones.

72. The seven worlds and this earth with the seven continents and seven oceans lie within the cosmic egg.

73. Within it are all these worlds along with thousands of very great mounts and rivers, nay, the very universe itself.

74. The moon, the sun, along with the stars, planets, the air, the Lokāloka mountain and whatever exists is included (i.e. present) in the cosmic egg.

75. The cosmic egg is enveloped externally by waters ten times its size.<sup>1</sup> The waters are externally surrounded by fire ten times their size.

76. Fire is externally enveloped by air ten times its size. The air is surrounded externally by ether ten times its size.

77. The air is enveloped by the ether. The ether is encircled by the cosmic Ego. The Ego is surrounded by *Mahat* (intellect) and *Mahat* (intellect) is surrounded by the unmanifest. The cosmic egg is thus surrounded by the seven coverings created by Prakṛti.

1. The theory of seven sheaths protecting the Cosmic Egg is another popular Purāṇic concept. Compare KP. I. 4. 42-45, Bd. P. I. 1. 3. 32 ff.

78. These eight Prakṛtis abide thus covering up mutually. Abiding at the time of creation, they swallow up one another (at the time of dissolution).

79. Thus generated mutually, they sustain one another as the sustainer and the sustained in their primary and secondary relationship.

80. The unmanifest (unconscious principle) is called *Kṣetra* and Brahmā (the conscious principle) is called *Kṣetrajña*. Thus the creation of Prakṛti is presided over by *Kṣetrajña*. It existed in the beginning without intellect. It appeared all of a sudden like lightning.

81. He who understands factually the manifestation of Brahmā, becomes endowed with fame, longevity, wealth and progeny.

82. Even if a man has renounced desires, he becomes pure-souled and attains his goal. By listening to this Purāṇa everyday one can attain pleasure and welfare.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### *The Origin of Creation*

*Lomaharṣaṇa continued :*

1. O Brāhmaṇas, the period of time calculated by me for the creation (of the universe) should be known as one day of the supreme Lord.

2. The night of the great Lord should also be known as entirely of the same duration. The period of creation is his day and the period of dissolution is called his night.

3. It is held that he (Brahmā) has only the day and no night. But such assumption is made just for the benefit of the world.

4-6. The subjects, the patriarchs, the seers of Vedic Mantras along with ascetics, eternally youthful sages like Sanat-

kumāra and others along with those who have attained salvation, the sense-organs and their objects, the subtle elements, as well as the intellect and the mind—all these stay during the day of the Lord Supreme; they are dissolved at the end of his day; at the end of the night, there is creation of the universe.

7. When the quality *Sattva* stays in itself and when the secondary creation is withdrawn, both *Pradhāna* and *Puruṣa* become similar (i.e. inactive).

8. The qualities *Tamas* and *Sattva* stay in a state of equilibrium. When there is equilibrium in the qualities mutually, it should be known as dissolution; when there is disequilibrium of the *guṇas*, it is called creation (i.e. creation takes place).

9. Just as oil abides in the gingelly seeds or ghee in milk, so does the quality *Rajas* stay unmanifest in *Sattva* and *Tamas*.

10. After remaining quiescent throughout the great night of the Lord, the creation of *Prakṛti* begins anew at day-break.

11. Entering the cosmic Egg, the great god caused, by his supreme *Yoga*, agitation in *Pradhāna* and *Puruṣa*.<sup>1</sup>

12. From *Pradhāna* that was being agitated, *Rajas* was produced. It is *Rajas* that causes the activity even as water causes the activity in the seeds.

13. The disequilibrium of qualities having taken effect the presiding (deities) are begotten. The three gods were created while the *guṇas* were being agitated. Those embodied gods, the souls abiding in all who have taken resort are extremely hidden.

14. The *Rajas* quality became *Brahmā*, *Tamas*, Fire and *Sattva* becomes *Viṣṇu*. *Brahmā*, the illuminator of *Rajas*,

1. *Kṣobha* 'agitation' is a process of contraction and expansion which is cyclic. It is called '*Samañcana-Prasāraṇa*' in *Śat. Br.* 8. 1. 4-10 and '*Sāṅkoca-Vikāsa*' in *KP.* I. 4. 15.

stays in the capacity of creator.<sup>1</sup>

15. Fire, the illuminator of *Tamas*, abides in the capacity of *Kāla*. *Viṣṇu*, the illuminator of *Sattva*, remains indifferent.

16. These alone are the three gods\* and the three fires. They are mutually dependent, devoted and faithful to one another.

17. They function jointly, sustain one another; they are ever in association with one another. They subsist on one another. There is no separation among them even for a moment. They do not leave off one another.

18. *Īśvara* is the highest deity. *Viṣṇu* is greater than *Mahat*. *Brahmā*, with dominant *Rajas*, functions for the purpose of creation. *Puruṣa* is known as *Para* (the supreme) and *Prakṛti* as *Parā* (great).

19. He (*Brahmā*) functions on being presided over by *Maheśvara* and being urged all round. *Mahat* and other (creations of *Prakṛti*) long stationed in their respective objects due to attachment, function thereafter.

20. Due to the disequilibrium of the qualities, *Pradhāna* begins to function at the time of creation. From *Pradhāna*, which is of the nature of *Sat* and *Asat*, presided over by *Īśvara*, the pair *Brahmā* and *Buddhi* (cosmic intelligence) are born simultaneously.

21. Then the *Kṣetrajña* termed *Brahmā*, of the nature of *Tamas* and the unmanifest, manifests himself in the beginning, fully equipped with sense-organs for all activities.

22. He, the unmanifest endowed with intellect shines forth with brilliance. He is verily the first embodied being abiding in the capacity of a cause.

1. Purāṇic writers identify *Guṇas* with the triad of gods *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* and *Rudra* (cf. *Bd. P. I.* 1. 4-6 and my note on it), *LP. I.* 70. 77-78. In our text *Agni* represents *Tamas Guṇa*. But since Vedic times *Rudra* is identified with *Agni*, e.g. 1) *Tvam agne Rudro asuro maho divah!*—*RV.* II. 1. 6, *TS.* 1.3.14.1; 2) *Tasmai Rudrāya namo astvagnaye!*—*A. V.* (*Atharva Veda*) VII. 87. 1.

*Purāṇa* writers have accepted the *Sāṅkhya* theory of cosmic evolution but they have added *Īśvara* or a supreme deity and have given a popular garb to this evolution for mass education.

\**V. L. Vedāḥ* 'The Vedas'.

23. He is equipped with unobstructable knowledge and supreme lordship. He is endowed with unobstructed *dharma* and detachment.

24. The knowledge, characterised by detachment, of that lord is unimpeded. The intellect of Brahmā identifying himself with that Lord, is affected by *Dharma* and *Aiśvarya* (supremacy).

25. Whatever he wishes mentally is created out of the unmanifest naturally, due to its being controlled, due to absence of attributes (?) and due to his being the lord of Devas.

26. In the capacity of Brahmā, he becomes the four-faced creator; in the capacity of Kāla, he is the destroyer; in the capacity of Puruṣa (Viṣṇu) he is the thousand-headed lord. These are the three states of the self-born God.<sup>1</sup>

27. In the capacity of Brahmā, the creator, he possesses *Sattva* and *Rajas* predominantly; as destroyer (of the universe), *Rajas* and *Tamas* predominantly; and as Puruṣa (Viṣṇu), *Sattva* exclusively. Thus is the state or course of attributes of the self-born Lord.

28. In the capacity of Brahmā he creates; in the capacity of Kāla he withdraws (destroys) the worlds; in the capacity of Puruṣa he remains unconcerned. These three are the states of the Lord of subjects.

29. Brahmā has the lustre of the interior of a lotus. Kāla has the lustre of collyrium. Puruṣa is lotus-eyed. Thus is the form of the supreme soul.

30. The Lord of Yogas who out of sportiveness has different creations, activities, forms, names and functions, creates and effects changes in (different) bodies.

31. Since he functions in the world in three ways, he is called *Triguṇa*. Since he is divided into four he is glorified as *Caturvyūha* (having four manifestations).

1. Cf. Bd. P. I. i. 4. 18, KP. I. 2. 91-92. There, the Reality or supreme God is Mahādeva while in VP. I.2.70, it is Viṣṇu—a difference in nomenclature only. Our author emphasizes that this supreme god assumes three forms for the creation etc. of the universe.

32. He is called *Ātman*<sup>1</sup> because whatever he attains (*Āpnoti*), takes up (*Ādatte*) and exists (*Asti*) for the (enjoyment of) objects, that is his permanent being.

33. He is called *Ṛṣi* because he goes everywhere. He is *Viṣṇu* because he pervades everything. He has the lordship over everything. He is the lord of physical body etc.

34. He is *Bhagavān* because there are such (excellences) in him. He is *Rāga* (lord of passion) because he controls passion. He is *Para* (Supreme) because he is the cosmic being. He is *Om* because he protects (all).

35. He is *Sarvajña* (omniscient) because he knows everything. He is *Sarva* because everything originates from him. As men emerge from him, he is known as *Nārāyaṇa*.

36. He divides his self into three and acts on the three worlds. He creates, surveys (protects) and devours through the three activities. In the beginning Hiraṇyagarbha manifested himself as four-faced lord.

37. Because he is first to manifest he is called the first god. He is called *Aja* because he is not born (is self-existent). Since he protects the subjects, he is called *Prajāpati*.

38. He is called *Mahādeva* because he is the greatest deity among Devas. He is *Īsvara* because he is the lord of worlds and because he is not subject to other's control.

39. He is called *Brahmā* due to his bigness. He is called *Bhūta* because of his (eternal) existence. He is *Kṣetrajña* because he knows the unmanifest cosmic nature. He is *Vibhu* because he is omnipresent.

40. Because he lies in the subtle body (called *Pūr*) he is called *Puruṣa*. He is called *Soṣāmbhū* because he is not pro-created and because he exists before the creation.

41-42. He is called *Yajña* because worship or sacrifice is offered to him. He is *Kavi* because he is omniscient. He is

1. The author is fond of derivations. Some of them are grammatically correct, some ingenious, but most of them are popular. Thus here *Ātman* is derived from  $\sqrt{āp}$ ,  $\sqrt{ad}$ , and  $\sqrt{as}$ . Some others trace it to  $\sqrt{an}$  'to breath',  $\sqrt{at}$  'to move',  $\sqrt{vā}$  'to blow' (MW. 135 a).

*Kramaṇa* because he is worthy of being approached and due to his patronage of castes, he is called *Āditya*, *Kapila*, *Agraja*, and *Agni*. His womb was gold and he was born of golden womb, so he is called *Hiranyagarbha* in this Purāṇa.

43. Even in hundreds of years, it is impossible to calculate the number of years that have elapsed since the self-born was manifested.

44. The time that has elapsed, the number of Kalpas that have passed after he had manifested is called *Para*. That much of time still remains for him. At its close, the subsidiary creation is to take place.

45. Crores and crores of Kalpas have already passed. Yet so many more still remain.

46. The Kalpa that is current now, O Brāhmaṇas, is called *Vārāha*. That is the first of the Kalpas now current.

47-50. It will have fourteen Manus, beginning with *Svāyambhuva* and including those of the past, present and the future. By these rulers of men, this earth including the seven continents is to be protected along with the subjects, by means of penance. Now listen in detail. Through (the description of) one *Manvantara*, all the future *Manvantaras*, and through (the account of) one Kalpa all the past and future Kalpas (are described).<sup>1</sup> The future Kalpas along with the futurities and dynasties should be inferred by the intelligent one (on the basis of) the past Kalpas.

## CHAPTER SIX

### *The Origin of Creation (Continued)*

*Sūta said:*

1-3. Water originated from fire. When the earth was destroyed in the fire and everything merged within (the water),

1. Cf. *Dhātā yathāpūrvam akalpayat|*

This is a strong popular belief shared by all Purāṇa writers.

when, therefore, the mobile and immobile beings were also destroyed, nothing could be known (seen) in that vast ocean of water<sup>1</sup>. Then Brahmā, called Nārāyaṇa, lord Brahmā of thousand eyes, thousand legs and thousand heads, the Puruṣa who is golden in complexion beyond the ken of sense organs, slept in that water.

4. Due to the preponderance of Sattva, he woke up and he beheld that the world was a void. About Nārāyaṇa they cite this verse.

5. We have heard the epithet of waters, that waters are called Nārā, and that they are minute or subtle bodies. Since he lies in waters, he is therefore called Nārāyaṇa.<sup>2</sup>

6. Having spent the whole period of night equal to a thousand yugas, at the close of the night, he assumed Brahmāhood for the purpose of creation.

7. Brahmā assumed the form of Vāyu<sup>3</sup> and moved about in the water like a glow-worm at night during the rainy season.

8-9. Then having come to know definitely that the earth lies submerged in those waters and being convinced about it by

1. *Ekārṇava*, 'the primeval watery flood' expresses the infinite unmanifest cause of the universe. Nilakanṭha on HV. P. 3. 9. 1-4 calls it the *Kāraṇa Brahman* from which all life comes into being. Purāṇas believe in this doctrine and use *Mahārṇava*, *agādha*, *stabdha*, *salila* (HV. 3. 10. 1), *Yugānta-toya* 'Water flood at the end of Yuga' (Bh. P. III. 8. 23) as synonyms for *Ekārṇava*. This doctrine is very old and *Brahma-Vādins* (expounders of Vedas) have elaborated it to explain the process of creation and dissolution (VP. I. 2. 22).

2. The usual derivation of Nārāyaṇa in other Purāṇas also. But Bd. P. I. 4. 27 traces it to Nara : Brahmā causes the sleep (i.e. perfect rest) of Naras (men), hence he is remembered as Nārāyaṇa.

*narāṇām svāpanam brahmā*

*tasmān nārāyaṇaḥ smṛtaḥ||*

3. The belief regarding the assumption of the form of Vāyu for reconnaissance before assuming the form of a boar, to lift up the earth, is as old as *Tait. Br.* 1. 2. 1. 3 which says :

*āpo vā idamagre salilam āsīt*

*tasmin prajāpatir vāyur bhūtvā acarat|*

*sa imām apaśyat|*

*tām varāho bhūtvāharat|*

reasoning (inference), he assumed another body as in the previous Kalpas for the lifting up of the earth. The noble soul then conceived mentally of a divine form.

10. Observing that the earth was overflowed with waters on all sides, (he thought to himself), "Oh, what great form should I assume and uplift the earth?"

11. He thought of the form of a Boar<sup>1</sup> charmingly comfortable in sporting about in waters. It was unassailable by living beings. It was of the nature of speech and was designated as Dharma\*.

12. It had a girth of ten and a height of a hundred Yojanas. It resembled a dark blue cloud in complexion. It grunted like the rumbling of thunder-clouds.

13. It had a huge body like a mountain. Its curved fangs were white and sharp and terrible. The eyes were brilliant like lightning and fire. Its lustre was like that of the sun.

14. Its shoulders were round, plump and large. It had the lion's valiant gait. Its buttocks were stout and lifted up (well developed). It had auspicious characteristics. It was charming.

15. Assuming this large immeasurable form of a boar, Viṣṇu entered the nether regions in order to lift up the earth.

16. He was the guide for the propounders of the Vedas.<sup>2</sup>

1. The germ of Varāha incarnation as given above is in *Tait. Br. Purānas* have given an elaborate description of that incarnation in Bh. P. III. 13. 17-33, Mt. P. Chs. 246-248, NP. I. 4. 1-52, Bd. P. I. 1. 5. 11-23 a number of verses in which are common to our text.

\**Brahman* i.e. the Veda in Bd. P. I. i. 5-11.

2. This beautiful description of the Boar-incarnation in Yajña terminology is found in other Purānas also. For example Bm. P. 213. 33-42, Bh. P. III. 13. 34-39. Writers on Smṛtis, Tantra and even Śaṅkara adopted it, e.g. *Viṣṇu Smṛti* 1. 3-12, Śaṅkara on *Viṣṇu Sahasranāma* 119—explanation of *Yajñāṅga*.

The comparison between Varāha and sacrifice (*yajña*) will be clear from the following attributes of the Varāha in the text e.g. 6.16b : *Agni-jihva*—Agni (fire) is the tongue of gods. Through the fire gods eat the food (offered in sacrifice). A Vedic concept—Cf. RV. IV. 57. 1

*darbha-romā* : The *darbha* grass spread on the altar is compared to the shaggy hair on the body of the boar.

*Brahmastryaḥ* : Brahma is the knowledge of the Vedas—Naturally its position is the highest, viz. the head.

He had sacrifice for his chest and the firealtar (*citi*) for his face. The Fire was his tongue; the *Darbha*-grass was his hair and Brahma was his head. He was of great penance.

17. The day and the night constituted his eyes. The ancillaries of the Vedas were his ear ornaments. The *Ājya* (ghee offering in sacrifice) was his nose; the sacrificial ladle was his snout. The sound of the *Sāman* hymns was his roaring grunt.

18. Endowed with glory as he was, he was an embodiment of truth and *dharma* and was established in virtuous valour. He was engaged in expiation. He was terrible. He had the huge form with the knees of an animal.

19. His body was straightened up. The offerings of *ghṛta* constituted his *Liṅga* (symbol). The (sacrificial) spot was his seed. He was the great medicinal herb (incarnate for curing distress). The altar was his inner soul. Mantras were his hips. The Soma mixed with clarified butter was his blood.

20. The Vedas were his shoulders. He had the fragrance of sacrificial offering. The *Havya* (oblations for the Devas) and *Kavya* (oblations for the Pitṛs) constituted his velocity. *Prāgvamśa*<sup>1</sup> (the room accommodating the sacrificers) was his body. He was lustrous and had undergone different initiations.

21. The sacrificial fees constituted his heart. He was an all-pervading Yogin in the form of a great Sattva. He was charming with the sacrificial rites of *Upākarmaṇ*. *Pravargya* (a rite in which hot milk is poured in a vessel, thus giving rise to fumes) constituted the whorls of hair on his chest\*<sup>2</sup>.

22. His gait and paths were the different *Chandas*. The secret *Upaniṣads* constituted his seat. He was accompanied by his consort *Chāyā*. He was lofty like a jewelled peak. Having thus assumed the form of a sacrificial Boar, the lord entered the waters.

1. The body of Varāha was so big and spacious as to accommodate many men, as *Prāgvamśa* (the room in which the members of the sacrificer's family and friends stay) is spacious.

\*read *Pravargyāvartabhūṣaṇaḥ* as in Bd. P. I. 1. 5. 18

2. *Pravargya-vitta-bhūṣaṇaḥ* in the text is obscure. Bd. P. I. 1. 5. 8 reads in that context *Pravargyāvartabhūṣaṇaḥ* which means 'Pravargya were the whorls of hair on Varāha's chest.

23-24. He, the lord of the subjects, got at the Earth covered with the waters. He approached and lifted it quickly. He diverted the waters of the oceans in the oceans and of the rivers in the rivers. The lord, for the welfare of the worlds, lifted with his curved fangs, the Earth that had gone deep into the nether world.

25. Holding the Earth in his hands he brought it to its place. The supporter of the Earth at first mentally supported the earth and then released it.

26. Over the flood of waters, the Earth floated like an immense boat. Due to the activities of the lord, it did not sink.

27. With a desire to set up the universe, the lord lifted up the Earth. Then, he, the lotus-eyed lord, decided to divide the Earth. He levelled the Earth and created the mountains on it.

28. Formerly when the creation was burnt by the Saṁvartaka fire, all the mountains, being consumed by that fire, lay shattered and scattered all over the earth.

29. In that *Ekāmāva* (the ocean of cosmic waters) the waters (solidified by cold) and collected by wind and were placed in a scattered manner here and there (wherever they were thus deposited); they became condensed into mountains.

30. Since they became motionless after being (thus) sprinkled, they were known as *Acalas*.<sup>1</sup> Since they are endowed with knots and joints, they were called *Parvatas*. Since they had been swallowed and hidden (formerly), they were called *Giris*. Since they had been collected, they were called *Śiloccayas*.

31. Thus after the worlds, oceans and mountains are destroyed at the end of a Kalpa, the Maker (Creator) of the universe creates them again and again, in the beginnings of the Kalpas.

32. He again created this earth along with the ocean, seven continents and mountains, as well as the four worlds, viz. Bhūr and others. After creating the worlds, he began the creation of the subjects.

1. Note the Purāṇic etymologies of *acala*, *parvata*, *giri*.

33. Desirous of creating different species of subjects, the self-born lord Brahmā recreated the beings in the same form as they had in the previous Kalpas.<sup>1</sup>

34. When he was contemplating over the creation intellectually, the dark and gloomy creation manifested itself simultaneously with Pradhāna.\*

35. Nescience (*Avidyā*) with five joints, viz. darkness, delusion, super-delusion, murkiness and super-murkiness\*\*, became manifested out of the Supreme Soul.

36. While he meditated, the creation became established in five ways. Just as a lamp is covered up with a pot, the creation was enveloped by darkness. Like a lamp lighted in a pitcher illuminated within and (dark) without, it was pure but devoid of feeling.

37. Its intellect and sense organs were concealed; it consisted of vegetation and since vegetation is declared to be primary it was called primary creation.

38. On seeing that the creation did not multiply, Brahmā was dissatisfied and he went into contemplation.

39-40. When he contemplated thus the *Tiryaksrotas* (the animal world) came into being. Since this creation proceeded obliquely, it was called *Tiryaksrotas*. Predominated by *Tamas*, they were mainly ignorant. They took to wrong direction. They were self-swayed and devoted to self.

41-42. The lord saw this second creation of *Tiryak-srotas*, proud of themselves, conceited and divided into twenty-eight—eleven based on the sense organs, nine of Udaya and the eight of Tārakā and other Śaktis.

1. Purāṇas believe that despite the annihilation of everything at the end of a Kalpa, god Brahmā recreates the universe on the model of the previous universe. They state this succinctly as follows : *dhātā yathāpūrvam akalpayat*.

\*A. reads : *Pradhāna-samakālam* : 'simultaneously while he was meditating'.

\*\*Com. on VP. I. 5 5 renders these as, ignorance, delusion, desire of enjoyment, anger and fear of death.

43. They were all illuminated within but covered externally. Since their activity was oblique, they were called *Tiryaksrotas*.

44. Having seen the second universe, the *Tiryaksrotas*, and having observed everything of it of that designation (nature), the Lord conceived of the (following) idea : Even as he was thinking uninterruptedly (*nityam*), the Sāttvika creation appeared (of itself, automatically).

45. This third creation was called *Ūrdhvasrotas*, consisting of beings in which the stream of life passed upwards. Since life proceeded upwards it was called *Ūrdhvasrotas*.

46. The *Ūrdhvasrotas* beings have abundance of comfort and pleasure. They are circumscribed outwardly and inwardly and are brilliant externally and internally.

47. These created beings are air etc. They are well settled after creating themselves. The *Ūrdhvasrotas* being the third (in the series of creations), that creation is known after them.

48. When gods with upward stream (the divine creation of *Ūrdhvasrotas*) were created god Brahmā was satisfied. As he was the competent Over-Lord, he thought of and created beings that would be *Sādhakas* (aspirants after spiritual power).

49. While he began contemplating, and since he was of truthful (effective) conception, the *Arvāksrotas* that could accomplish the task of creation, manifested themselves out of the unmanifest (*Avyakta*). Since the stream of life proceeded downwards, they are called *Arvāksrotas*.

50. They are characterized by the abundance of brilliance and were dominated by the attributes *Tamas*, *Sattva* and *Rajas*. Hence they have excess of misery and are continuously engaged in activities.

51. They are human beings who are enlightened externally and internally and accomplish the task of creation. Through the characteristics of *Tāraka* etc. they are of eight types.

52. These human beings are of accomplished souls. They are of the same nature as Gandharvas. Thus the creation of *Arvāksrotas* of *Tejas* (Light) has been narrated.

53. The fifth creation called *Anugraha* is of four types, through *Viparyaya* (Contrariety), *Śakti* (Power), *Tuṣṭi* (Satisfaction)

and *Siddhi* (achievement). The created beings know factually the past and the present objects.

54. The sixth creation is said to be that of beings such as *Bhūtādi*. *Bhūtādi* is characterized by contrariety and disability.

55. The first creation is of *Mahat*. It is known as *Mahat-sarga*. The second is the creation of *Tanmātras* and is called the creation of the *Bhūtas*.

56. The third creation is that of *Vikāras* (the products of Prakṛti) and is perceptible by the senses. Thus the *Prākṛta* creation took place with conscious fore-knowledge.

57. The 'Mukhya' creation is the fourth in order. The *Mukhyas* are the immobile beings. The creation of *Tiryaksrotas* is the fifth consisting of animals.

58. The sixth creation of *Ūrdhvasrotas* consists of divine beings. The seventh creation of the *Arvāksrotas* is that of mankind.

59. The eighth creation is *Anugraha*. It is characterised by Sattva and Tamas. These (latter) five are the *Vaikṛta* creation and the (first) three are *Prākṛta*.

60-61. The ninth creation *Kaumāra* is both *Prākṛta* and *Vaikṛta*. The three *Prākṛta* creations were brought about without planning or pre-meditation. The six creations of Brahmā function intelligently. Now understand the *Anugraha Sarga* in detail.

62-63. It is of four types found in all living beings through contrariety, power, satisfaction and achievement. In the immobile beings there is *Viparyāsa* (contrariety or loss of consciousness). In the animals, there is *Śakti* (power). Human beings are *Siddhātmanas* (with souls capable of achieving spiritual progress). In Devas there is *Tuṣṭi* (satisfaction).

64. There are thus the nine creations including *Prākṛtas* and *Vaikṛtas*. By their mutual combination, the types are many.

65-66. At the beginning, Brahmā created three mental sons equal to himself, viz. Sanandana, Sanaka and the intelligent Sanātana who possessed great power and enlightenment Those (sons) of great splendour and strength renounced

(the world) due to their special knowledge of *Vivarta* (the unreal appearance of the world in place of Brahman). Due to multiplicity, they were spiritually awakened. They were abandoned (by their father). Without creating any subjects they retired.

67. When they had left, Brahmā created other mental sons who could accomplish the object. They identified themselves with their position and abided till the final dissolution of the world. (Now) know them by their names :

68-70. They are water, fire, earth, air, ether, quarters, heaven, firmament, oceans, rivers, mountains, plants, the 'souls' of medicinal herbs, trees and creepers, units of time, *Lavas*, *Kāṣṭhas*, *Kalās*, *Muhūrtas*, *Sandhis* (junctions of day and night like dusk, dawn etc.), night, day, fortnights, months, *Ayanas*, years and Yugas. These are the positions with which they identify themselves.

71. The classes of society are born of his limbs : Brāhmaṇas (were created) out of his mouth; Kṣatriyas out of his arms; Vaiśyas out of his thighs; and Sūdras out of his feet.

72. The lord is beyond *Avyakta* (unmanifest Prakṛti). The Cosmic Egg is born of the unmanifest. Brahmā is born of the Cosmic Egg. The worlds are created by him.

73. Thus this first section has been narrated to you all very briefly and not in details. The whole of this Purāṇa, is briefly narrated in this first *Pāda* (quarter).

## SECTION 2 : UPODGHĀTA PĀDA

### CHAPTER SEVEN

#### *Transition between two Yugas (Ages)*

##### *Introductory*

1. Thus this first *Pāda* (section) the main theme of which was *prakriyā* was narrated. On hearing it, Sanātana, the descendant of Kāśyapa was much delighted in mind.

2. Addressing Sūta with (appreciative) words, he asked him the subsequent narrative. "O Knower of Kalpas, please narrate to us (the events during) the period of transition between the two ages.<sup>1</sup>

3. We are desirous to know the difference between the two Kalpas, viz. the one that has gone and the other that is current. Let us also know the *Pratisandhi* (period of transition) between the two (Kalpas) as you are undoubtedly very intelligent."

*Lomahaṣaṇa said :*

4. I shall describe to you here the difference between the two Kalpas: the one that has gone and the other that is current, and the period of transition between the two.

5-6. O sages of holy rites, now understand the Manvantaras that are in the Kalpas. This auspicious Kalpa that is current now is (called the) Vārāha Kalpa. The Kalpa that has gone before this Kalpa was (known as) Sanātana. Now understand the (condition of) the interim period between that Kalpa and the present one.

1. Out of the five main characteristics of a Purāṇa, description of Manvantaras is one. Thus we find it in Bh. P. VIII. 1. 1-29, KP. I. 51, NP. I. 40. 17-37 and others. This chapter which textually corresponds to Bd. P. I. 2. 6 deals with Kalpas and the interim period between them.