

A STUDY OF THE VRATAS AS DESCRIBED IN THE *MATSYAPURĀṆA*

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Abstract

Yajña which occupied prominent place among rituals among Vedic Aryans gradually lost its importance during course of time and Puranic culture started gaining popularity among the masses. Thus religious rites prescribed in puranas got importance; common people adopted the vratas, upavāsas, śrāddhas, prāyascittas, dānas, dikṣās, etc. as the way of worshipping the deities while Vedic yajña was confined among upper classes. Among the religious rites described in the Purāṇas vratas occupy a very important place which is testified by the large numbers of vratas enjoined therein. This paper is an attempt to analyse different types of vratas enumerated in *Matsya Purāṇa*.

Keyword: *Yajña, vrata, upavāsa, śrāddha, prāyascittas, dāna, dikṣā, saṅkalpa*

Introduction

The Purāṇas are repositories of stories, legends, and other religious rites and customs. The Purāṇas hold the ideas and ideals of the Hindu religious community. During the Puranic age the Hindu religion emerged with a new look which was different from the Vedic ideas of worshipping gods and goddesses. In this period performance of Vedic *yajña* has lost its importance. In place of Vedic *yajña* common people adopted the vratas, upavāsas, śrāddhas, prāyascittas, dānas, dikṣās, etc. as the way of worshipping the deities. Unlike the Vedic yajñas these religious works were not reserved only for the upper three castes. All castes and all common people including śūdras, maidens, married women, widows, even prostitutes can take part in these rites. Among the religious rites described in the Purāṇas vratas occupy a

very important place which is testified by the large numbers of vratas enjoined here.

Meaning of *vrata*

In the dictionary of M.M. Williams several meanings are given for the word of *vrata* viz., (1) will, command, law, ordinance, rule ; (2) obedience, service (3) dominion, realm, conduct, manner, usage, custom ; (4) religious vow or practice, any pious observance, meritorious act of devotion or austerity, solemn vow, rule, holy practices, (5) any vow or firm purpose, resolve to (6) practice of always eating the same food, feeding only on milk.¹ P. V. Kane in his *History of Dharmaśāstra* derives the term *vrata* from the root *vṛ* (to choose or will) with the suffix *ta*. He says, "Therefore, when the word *vrata* is derived from 'vṛ' with the suffix 'ta', the meaning of *vrata* can be 'what is willed' or simply 'will'."² This term is used in the sense of law or ordinance as the will of a person who has authority is obeyed by others as law. People generally believe that the gods have laid down certain rules and duties to be followed by them. When commands are obeyed or duties are performed in the same way for long, they become the patterns of obligations and thus it means customs or practices.

The vratas are found treated in the Vedas, Brāhmaṇas, epics, Dharmaśāstras, Sūtras and Purāṇas. In *Ṛgvedasāṁhitā*, *vrata* is used to mean divine ordinance or ethical patterns of conduct.³ Again in the *Ṛgveda*, Agni is said to be the *vratapā* which means the protector of *vrata*.⁴ *Atharvaveda* uses the term *vrata* as ordinances of gods.⁵ Yāskācārya has given two meanings of *vrata* viz. (1) religious observance or restrictions as to food and behaviour; (2) special food prescribed for a person engaged in religious rites.⁶ In the sūtras of Pāṇini also these meanings of the term *vrata* are expressed clearly.⁷ In the *Mahābhārata* the word *vrata* is used to mean mainly a religious undertaking or vow in which one has to follow certain restrictions on food or on general behaviour.⁸ Śābara in his *Bhāṣya* on *Mīmāṃsādarśana* stated that *vrata* means an activity of mind which is a resolve in the form of "I shall not do this".⁹ The Mitākṣara on *Yājñavalkyaśmṛti* indicates that *vrata* is a mental resolve to do something or refrain from doing something.¹⁰

Thus the word *vrata* has different etymological meanings, yet it is mainly used as a religious undertaking observed on certain day, *tithi*, month or other period of time for the attainment of fruits. *Vrata* is observed by the worship of the deity, usually accompanied by restrictions to food and behaviour. *Vrata* is a definite resolve relating to a certain matter held as obligatory and proceeds to lay down that it may be positive like „I must do it' or negative „I must not do this“.

Concept of *Vrata* in the Purāṇas

Though all the scriptures speak about vratas, it is the Purāṇas which give the utmost importance to the observance of vratas. Almost all the Purāṇas have discussed about the vratas and stressed the need for the performance of vratas and upavāsas. The authors of the Purāṇas have placed the vratas before the Vedic sacrifices. The *Brahmapurāṇa* has stated that the observance of a *vrata* for the god Sūrya for one day only gives the reward which cannot be achieved by hundreds of Vedic sacrifices.¹¹ Thousands of vratas in the sense of self imposed, devout, or ceremonial observances of different sorts are described in the Purāṇas. The rules of the vratas in the Purāṇas have been very much liberalized to embrace different segments of people. For this reason the caste and gender restrictions have been reduced. Yet there had to be some rules guiding the whole process in order to protect and preserve the sanctity of the ritual system itself. According to *Agnipurāṇa*, *vrata* involves certain regulations such as regular bath, limited food, worshipping god etc.¹² It also speaks of ten virtues which must be followed as common to all vratas, viz., forbearance, truthfulness, compassion, charity, purity of body and mind, curbing the organs of the senses, worship of deities, offering into fire, satisfaction and not depriving any other of his belonging.¹³ The central point of *vrata* is *upavāsa* i.e. fasting. The *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa*, *Liṅgapurāṇa* and *Matsyapurāṇa* give a clear picture of the extent to which numerous vratas are performed with upavāsas. However, alternative rite is permitted for those who find it hard to observe a fast¹⁴ It is said in the *Matsyapurāṇa* that one who cannot take a complete fast of 24 hours may take food after sunset and this is known as *nākta*.¹⁵ Purāṇas enjoin that before starting a *vrata sankalpa* (mental resolve) is to be taken and there

must be a *pāraṇā* in the conclusion of the *vrata*. In case of a fast or a *vrata*, *saṅkalpa* is to be generally made in the morning. Even when a *tithi* doesn't begin in the morning the *saṅkalpa* has to be made in the morning. If no *saṅkalpa* is made the devotee loses the merit of *vrata* and gets very little benefit from it.¹⁶ For making a *saṅkalpa* one has to perform some rites to the gods. The *Garuḍapurāṇa* has an ideal example of such *saṅkalpa*. It is found thus "O God! I have undertaken this *vrata* in your presence; may it succeed without obstacles if you become favourable to me; after I undertake this *vrata* if I die when it is half finished, may it become completely fulfilled through your favour".¹⁷ On the other hand, a *vrata* comes to an end by a rite called *udyāpana* or *pāraṇā*. The *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* clarifies that a *vrata* ends with *pāraṇā* and at the end of a *vrata*, *pāraṇa* takes place the day after the day of the fast and generally performed in the morning.¹⁸ It ordained that without doing *pāraṇā* of a *vrata*, another cannot be started. A *vrata* becomes fruitless if the *udyāpana* or *pāraṇā* is not performed.

The *Padmapurāṇa* classifies *vrata* into three types, viz., mental vratas, physical vratas and vratas of speech. Non-violence, truthfulness, not depriving a person of his property by wrongfully taking it, continence, freedom from hypocrisy are the mental vratas that lead to the satisfaction of Hari. Eating once only in the day, eating after the sunset (*nakta*), fasting, abstaining from begging, etc are physical vratas for human beings. Study of the Vedas, recounting the name of Viṣṇu, speaking the truth, abstaining from backbiting are the vratas of speech.¹⁹ Another classification is made on the basis of time i.e. for how much time a *vrata* lasts. A *vrata* may last for a day or a fortnight or a month, season, *ayana*²⁰, year etc. and on the basis of such time vratas are classified.

Vratas Described in the *Matsyapurāṇa* :

The *Matsyapurāṇa* containing twenty thousand stanzas is the store house of historical, political, social, geographical, religious data of ancient India. It has exhibited the religious part in a considerable length. It has depicted the religious customs like *vrata*, *upavāsa*, *dāna*, *śrāddha*, *tīrtha* etc. to a great extent. Among

all the descriptions of religious activities described in the *Matsyapurāṇa vrata* holds the upper hand as the main custom of that age. As many as 90 vratas are described here. It is found mentioned in this *Purāṇa* that the great sages preferred vratas or *tapas* to Vedic sacrifices which involve killing of animals.²¹ They believed that *vrata* takes a man to heaven. The emphasis of *Matsyapurāṇa* on vratas is regarded as special feature of Puranic religion and deserve a thorough study. The main objective of these vratas are purification and enrichment of the individual and social life by means of positive action. Among the many vratas described in this *Purāṇa* some are practised even today. There are again some vratas which are not found to be prevalent now a days. But from the elaborate description of those vratas found in this *Purāṇa* it can be assumed that during the time of the *Purāṇa* these vratas held importance in the society. In the present paper we shall deal with those vratas first which are commonly observed by the people all over India, even today. We shall also discuss in detail some other vratas, which, though not practised now a days, appear to possess much importance in the *Purāṇa*.

1. Akṣayaṭṛtīyāvratā :

The *Akṣaya ṭṛtīyā* is regarded as one of the holiest *tithis* of a year. It is the third day of bright fortnight (*śuklapakṣa*) of the month *Vaiśākha* (April-May). If this *ṭṛtīyā* falls in *Kṛttikā Nakṣatra* then it is regarded more sacred²². One who observes a *vrata* in this auspicious day begets inexhaustible fruit of all his good deeds. The progeny of the devotee will be unlimited and the good deeds of the person will never come to an end. This *vrata* is known as *Akṣayaṭṛtīyāvratā*. It is described in the *Matsyapurāṇa* thus :

*vaiśākhaśuklapakṣe tu ṭṛtīyā yairūpoṣitā/
akṣayam phalamāpnoti sarvasya sukṛtasya ca /*²³

It means : one who observes a fast in the third day of bright fortnight of Vaiśākha attains imperishable fruits of his all good deeds.

In the 65th Chapter of *Matsyapurāṇa* the greatness of *Akṣayaṭṛtīyā vrata* is found described by lord Śiva to Nārada in response to a query of the great sage. The *Purāṇa* mentions that one

who is willing to observe this *vrata* should take bath in water mixed with *akṣata* (unhusked rice) and offer *akṣata* to Lord Viṣṇu. *Akṣata* or well made barley meal (*śaktu*) should be offered to the brāhmaṇas as well as should be taken by the devotee himself. By performing this *vrata* the devotee gets never ending benefit.²⁴ If this *vrata* is observed according to rules even for once, the devotee begets the benefit of all the *ṭṛtīyās*. One who keeps a complete fast on this *ṭṛtīyā* and worships Janārdana gets the benefit of having performed a *Rājasūya* sacrifice and attains bliss.²⁵ *Viṣṇusmṛti* said that one should fast on this *tithi* and worship Vāsudeva with whole grains of rice and should offer them into fire and donate to the *brāhmaṇa*. Thus the devotee becomes purified from all sins, whatever is donated or sacrificed or muttered on this *tithi* brings inexhaustible results.²⁶ “The *Bhaviṣyottarapurāṇa* deals at some length with it. It says that this *tithi* is one of the *yugādi* *tithis* because the *kṛta* age began on it. Whatever is done on it, such as bath, gifts, muttering of sacred texts (*japa*), offerings into fire, *Veda* study, satiating deceased (with water)— all that becomes inexhaustible. It provides that gifts of jars of water and of umbrellas and of footwear should be made (to brāhmaṇas) on this day and that what is sacrificed or donated on this day never comes to an end and therefore this *tithi* is called *akṣaya* (inexhaustible) by the sages.”²⁷

Describing the majesty of *Pr̥thudaka tīrtha*, *Vāmaṇapurāṇa* speaks about *Akṣayaṭṛtīyā*. It is said in that *Purāṇa* that the day on which Moon, Sun and Jupiter unitedly come under *Mārgasīrā Nakṣatra* is called *Akṣaya ṭṛtīyā*. And on this sacred day the devotee should visit the *Pr̥thudaka tīrtha*.²⁸

In the modern age also *Akṣayaṭṛtīyā vrata* carries great value. People worship Vāsudeva on this day. Śrī Bānkebihārī temple of Vṛndāvan remains open for visiting the main idol of lord Vāsudeva only in this auspicious day. Many businessmen start their business on this day. Gifts of pitchers filled with water, together with sweets and seasonal fruits are held in this *vrata* for the benefit of departed ancestors.²⁹

2. Śivacaturdaśī Vrata :

Śivacaturdaśīvrata as the name suggests is a *vrata* which is

observed for propitiating Śiva for the welfare of the devotee. Hence this *vrata* is also known as *Māheśvaravrata*. In the 95th Chapter of *Matsyapurāṇa* Nandikeśvara, the chief attendants of Lord Śiva tells Nārada about the *Śivacaturdaśī vrata*. *Śivacaturdaśī vrata* is observed on the 14th day (*caturdaśī*) of bright fortnight in the month of *Mārgaśīrā* (Nov-Dec).³⁰ This *vrata* is regarded as the giver of happiness and emancipation. It is so effective that it washes away the sin of killing of *brāhmaṇa* and also the sins committed against parents, brothers etc.³¹ The devotee gets long life, good health and prosperity by observing this *vrata*.³² The woman who observes it taking permission of her husband or son or the preceptor attains bliss by the grace of Śiva.³³ This *vrata* is regarded as equal to a thousand *Aśvamedha*.³⁴ The *Matsyapurāṇa* describes the procedure of this *vrata* thus : The devotee who wants to observe this *vrata*, should take meal once and pray lord Śiva with the *sankalpa* of *Śivacaturdaśī vrata*, on the day prior to the *caturdaśī* i.e. on the 13th day. He takes the vow with these words :

“O Lord of All deities! I take refuge in thee. Tomorrow, the *caturdaśī* day, I shall take a complete fast without eating anything and worship Śiva. I shall give away a bull, made of gold and then take my meals the next day”³⁵ On the next morning i.e. on the *Caturdaśī* day the devotee worships lord Śiva and his consort Umā with white lotus, garlands sandal paste etc. Different mantras are recited in connection with the different limbs of Śiva. The feet of the lord is worshipped after reciting the *mantra śivāya namaḥ*, the head is worshipped with the *mantra sarvātmane namaḥ*, the eyes, with the chanting of after chanting *trinetrāya namaḥ* etc.³⁶ Then a bull made of gold is to be given to the *brāhmaṇa* along with a pitcher which is full of water, covered with white garments, five jewels, and various kinds of eatables.³⁷ The devotee should eat *ghee* mixed with coagulated milk and sleep on the ground. Nextday after worshipping the brahmins he should take food. The worship is performed in the same way on all the 14th days of each fortnight of every month for twelve months. Special mantras are recited for commencing with the month *Mārgaśīrā* starting with *Śaṅkarāya namaḥ*. Other names of Śiva which are uttered in the mantras are : Karavīraka, Tryambaka, Maheśvara Mahādeva, Sthānu, Paśupati, Nātha, Śambhū, Paramānanda, Somārdhadhārin, and Bhauma³⁸ Thereafter *pancagavya* consisting of cow,s urine, cow-dung, milk,

curds and clarified butter, water mixed with *kuśa* grass, wood apple, camphor, *agaru*, barley, black sesamum and long pepper are offered to Śiva as *Prāśana*.³⁹ These are offered to Śiva one by one on the *caturdaśī* day of each month. Similarly Śiva is offered one type of flower every month among *mandāra*, jasmine, *dhatūrā*, *sambhālū*, *aśoka*, *mallikā*, *pātala arka*, *kadamba*, *śatapatrī* and *kamala*.⁴⁰ Again in the month of Kārtika the devotee should feed brāhmaṇas with various kinds of food and offer garments, ornaments and garlands. As words given in *sankalpa* the devotee gives a black bull as gift with Vedic rites. And then he gives away a bull and a cow along with a golden image of Śiva and Pārvatī. A bedstead, along with eight pearls, sheets, pillows, and vase is also give away to the *brāhmaṇa* who is acquainted with *Sāmaveda*.⁴¹ The *Matsyapurāṇa* also enjoins that gifts should be given to a *brāhmaṇa* who is not widower, who is of good conduct and who is not of defective limbs. If the preceptor of the devotee is present, then the gifts should be given to him only. In this way the *Matsyapurāṇa* describes the *Śivacaturdaśī vrata*.

The *Agnipurāṇa* deals with a *vrata* which is very similar to *Śivacaturdaśī vrata*. This is which is termed as *Phalacaturdaśī vrata*. This *vrata* is also observed for getting happiness and emancipation. It is observed on the 3rd, 8th or 12th or 14th day of the bright fortnight in the month of *Mārgaśīrā*. The devotee lives only on fruits and worships lord Śiva. And then fruits are given as gifts to the *brāhmaṇa*.⁴²

Again the *Liṅgapurāṇa* deals with a similar *vrata* which is observed in the month of *Pauśa*. The devotee lives only on *nākta* taking food of wheat, rice and milk only. This *vrata* is observed till the month of *Mārgaśīrā* for one year.⁴³

A vow called *Śivarātrivrata* is observed even today in Assam, Bengal, Orissa and other parts of India. This is observed on the 14th day of the dark fortnight of *Māgha* or *Phālguna*. This *vrata*, though performed on the *caturdaśī* day and dedicated to Śiva is different from *Śivacaturdaśī vrata* mentioned in the *Matsyapurāṇa*.

3. *Saṁkrāntivrata* :

The 98th Chapter of *Matsyapurāṇa* deals with *Saṁkrāntivrata*.

Saṁkrānti means the passage of the Sun from one *rāśi* to the following *rāśi*. And thus the *rāśi* in which the Sun enters is designated as the *saṁkrānti* of that name.⁴⁴ Each of the twelve *saṁkrānti* is regarded as auspicious. The *Saṁkrāntivrata* is observed on the day of equinoxes or solstices.⁴⁵ This *vrata* leads a man to heaven and begets everlasting bliss and it washes off all the sins of the devotee. One who observes this *vrata* enjoys the honour in the next world and is respected by the Gandharvas, Indra and other gods.⁴⁶

The description of the *Saṁkrāntivrata* found in this *Purāṇa* runs thus : the day prior to *Saṁkrānti* the devotee takes his food only once. And on the following day he cleanses teeth and takes bath in water mixed with sesamum. On the *Saṁkrānti* day he draws a lotus with eight petals with sandal on the earth in the centre of which the presence of the Sun is invoked. A golden vessel of clarified butter, a pitcher of water and a golden lotus are donated to a *brāhmaṇa* according to one's own capacity.⁴⁷ Thereafter the *arghya* consisting of sandal, water and flowers is placed on the earth as an oblation to the Sun following the *mantra-viśvāya viśvarūpāya viśvadhāme svayambhūve namo'nanta! Namō dhātre ṛkṣāmayajuṣāmpate*.⁴⁸ This ritual is observed in each month or at the end of the year. Rice cooked in milk, and sugar is poured into fire as oblation. Then the *brāhmaṇa* is fed with eatables. On that occasion 12 pitchers of water with few gems, 12 golden lotus flowers, and 12 milch cows are given to poor and well deserved *brāhmaṇas*. In case of a poor person it is mentioned that he may give only one cow. Afterwards an image of earth along with that of serpent *Śeṣa* is made of gold, silver, copper or even of kneaded flour, according to the means of the devotee and given away to *Brāhmaṇa* along with the golden image of the Sun. Miserliness should be avoided in this *vrata*. One who does this mistake goes to hell in spite of having riches.

Now-a-days people take special *snānas* or baths in the river Ganges or any other holy rivers on *Saṁkrānti* days. The digests also prescribe different gifts on the *Saṁkrānti* day from which great merit is collected. Among all *Saṁkrāntis* *Makarasaṁkrānti* is observed all over India as a religious and social festival. No fast is observed now on this day. But bathing in holy rivers and giving

gifts are very much in vogue. The *Makarasaṁkrānti* coincides with the *Māghabihu* of Assam which is actually a social festival and is totally different from *Samkrāntivrata* of *Matsyapurāṇa*.

4. *Nakṣatrapuruṣavrata* :

Nakṣatrapuruṣa is a form of lord Nārāyaṇa. And *Nakṣatrapuruṣavrata* is the worship of Nārāyaṇa.⁴⁹ In the 54th Chapter of *Matsyapurāṇa* the *Nakṣatrapuruṣavrata* is discussed. Here in the form of Nakṣatrapuruṣa, Nārāyaṇa is conceived as the person comprising 27 Nakṣatras in his body. According to the *Bṛhat Saṁhitā* the *Mūlā Nakṣatra* dwells in his feet, *Rohiṇī Nakṣatra* in his thighs, *Aśvinī* in his knees, *Pūrvaśāḍha* and *Uttarāśāḍha* in his chest etc.⁵⁰ The worshipper of this *vrata* attains all his desires and gets happiness. This *vrata* washes off all sins of the devotee as well as deceased ancestor committed in their lives.⁵¹ *Vamanapurāṇa* also tells about the fruits of this *vrata*. It says that by performing it Bhṛgu washed off his all sins.⁵² Revatī also observed it for getting son, Rambhā did it for radiance and beauty, King Pururavā had accomplished *Nakṣatrapuruṣa vrata* to please Lord Viṣṇu and attained the charm of the Moon and got back kingdom and being pleased by this *vrata* Lord Viṣṇu bestows and sweet voice to the Tilotamā.⁵³

Procedure: In this *vrata* the devotee prepares an image of Vāsudeva made according to the instructions of the brāhmaṇas and then it is worshipped in the month of *Caitra* at the time when the moon is in the nakṣatras like *Mūlā* etc. *Mūlā Rohiṇī, Aśvinī, Pūrvaśāḍha, Uttarāśāḍha, Pūrvāfālgunī, Uttaraśāḍha, Kṛttikā, Purvabhādra, Uttarabhādra, Revatī, Anurādhā, Dhaniṣṭhā Viśākhā, Hastā, Punarvasu, Aśleṣa, Jyeṣṭhā, Śravaṇa, Pusa, Svātī, Satabhīṣa, Māgha, Mārghasīrā, Citrābharaṇī* and *Ārdra* are honoured in connection with the limbs viz. feet, ankles, knees, thighs, organ of generation, waist, ribs, arm-pits, chest, back, forearms, hands, tips of the finger, nail, throat, ears, mouth, teeth, gullet of the mouth, nose, eyes, forehead and head respectively of the *Nakṣatrapuruṣa*.⁵⁴ After completion of the *vrata* the devotee donate a mace filled with pearls and jewels as also cows, bedstead etc. to the pious brāhmaṇa and thereafter, the devotee prays lord Viṣṇu for the fulfilment of his desires thus : “O thou! having the

form of Brahmā ,Viṣṇu and Śiva fulfill all my cherished desires.”⁵⁵ The image of Viṣṇu along with the goddess Lakṣmī is given to a worthy *brāhmaṇa* and his wife along with wooden bedstead⁵⁶. Then he prays to Viṣṇu for health, beauty and wealth. The image of the Nakṣatrapuruṣa is given away along with other clothes to the *brāhmaṇa* who is well versed in astronomy.⁵⁷ During the 27 days of this *vrata* the devotee should take food without salt and oils.

A devotee who worships Lord Viṣṇu according to the rituals attains liberation. Worshipping Lord Viṣṇu's different limbs helps in attaining good health and a disease free life. This way, whoever performs this *vrata*, his desire is fulfilled with the blessings of Viṣṇu. We have not found any mention of *Nakṣatrapuruṣa vrata* being observed now-a-days.

5. *Rohiṇīcandraśayanavrata* :

In the 57th Chapter of *Matsyapurāṇa*, the *Rohiṇīcandraśayana vrata* has been discussed. When sage Nārada has asked lord Śiva about such a vow which can give long life, good health, kingdom in several successive lives then Śiva describes about the *Rohiṇīcandraśayana vrata*. *Rohiṇīcandraśayana vrata* is regarded as one of the most sacred *vratas*. In this *vrata* the devotee worship the image of Nārāyaṇa, after reciting the names of the moon in observing it. Śiva said-

*rohiṇīcandraśayanam nāmavratamihottamam/
tasminnārāyaṇasyarcyāmarcayedindunāmabhiḥ/ /* ⁵⁸

When the *pañcadaśī* or *pūrṇimā* day falls on Monday or *Rohiṇī* asterism falls on full moon day the devotee takes bath with the *pañcagavya* and mustard oil and after that recites the *apyāsva mantra* for hundred and eight times. The *mantra* is found in the *Ṛgveda* thus: *ā pyāyāsva sametu ve viśvataḥ soma vṛṣṇyam/
bhavā vājasya saṁgathe/*⁵⁹. This *vrata* is also observed by śūdras also.⁶⁰ They should worship the gods Viṣṇu, and Soma with the 19 non- Vedic mantras starting with *somāya sāntāya namaḥ* and ending with *viśveśvarāya namaḥ*.⁶¹ After uttering these mantras the devotee worships Madhusūdhana with fruits and flowers⁶². Then again he worships Soma and Viṣṇu with *kadamba*, blue lotus, jasmine, *kuvja*, white kannair and *campaka* flowers. Thus the

devotee observes it till the end of the year. Rohiṇī the spouse of Moon is also worshipped in this *vrata*. After observance of the above mentioned rites, the devotee gives away the golden idol of Rohiṇī and Moon to a good *brāhmaṇa* along with white pearls and white clothes, milk, fruits etc.⁶³ Then the devotee gives a white cow to the worthy *brāhmaṇa* and prayed the *brāhmaṇa* and his consort as the Soma or Moon in company with Rohiṇī for happiness, emancipation, health and prosperity.

P.V. Kane in his *History of Dharmaśāstra* given some exceptional rules about this *vrata*. According to this book, the devotee should drink cow's urine after completion of the prayer to Rohiṇī and Moon and take 28 morsels food without any flesh.⁶⁴ This *vrata* is described in the *Padmapurāṇa* also in the same way as in *Matsyapurāṇa*.

6. *Madanadvādaśī vrata* :

The *vrata* of *Madanadvādaśī* also finds an important place in the *Matsyapurāṇa* though this *vrata* is described in the Digests like *Kṛtyakalpataru*, *Kṛtyaratnākara*, Hemādri's work on *vrata* etc., among the Purāṇas it is only the *Matsyapurāṇa* which gives its elaborate description. In the 7th Chapter of the *Matsyapurāṇa* Diti, the mother of the Maruts asked Sage Vaśiṣṭha about some *vrata* which can remove her grief of her son's destruction and carry happiness for her. Then Vaśiṣṭha advised Diti to observe *Madanadvādaśī vrata*. By observing it Diti regained her forty nine sons and became liberated from her grief. This *vrata* is observed in the month of *Caitra* on the 12th day (*dvādaśī*) of bright fortnight (*śuklapakṣa*)⁶⁵. The observer of this *vrata* becomes liberated from all evils, gets worthy sons, prosperity and becomes one with the Viṣṇu⁶⁶. This *vrata* also improves the man both physically and morally.⁶⁷

Procedure: On the 12th day of bright fortnight of *Caitra* the observer of *Madanadvādaśī vrata* should place an unbroken jar covering it with two white clothes and white sandal paste. That jar should be filled with different fruits and white rice.⁶⁸ After this a small plate of copper containing some fruits, gold, and molasses should be placed on the top of the jar.⁶⁹ A plantain leaf, bearing an image of Madana is placed above it. And to the left of it the image of Rati,

made of sugar is placed⁷⁰. After this the worship of Madana and Rati starts with the bathing of the two images with incense and water. And thereafter white flowers, rice, sesamum should be offered. And then the *aṅgapujā* of lord Hari should be done with different mantras.⁷¹ Various parts of the body of Keśava starting from the feet, then the legs, thighs, waist, stomach, breast, mouth, hands and head are worshipped uttering mantras. Thereafter offering sandal and incense prayer is sung accompanied by music and glorifying Kāma and Keśava. On the following morning the jar should be given to a *brāhmaṇa*. After that the worshipper should feed a number of *brāhmaṇas* with devotion, and take his own meal without salt. Then uttering the prayer *priyatāmatra bhagavān kāmārūpī janārdanaḥ/ hṛdaye sarvabhūtānām ya ānando bhidhīyate*⁷², the invited *brāhmaṇas* are dismissed with gifts. This routine is followed for a complete year. And at the beginning of the 13th month on the completion of the *vrata* a golden image of Rati is worshipped. Afterwards white sesamum mixed with clarified butter is offered into fire pronouncing the names of Madana. At the end of the *vrata* the priest and his consort are worshipped, feasted and offered within various gifts viz., garlands, cow, butter, bedstead, ornaments, ornaments etc.⁷³ All the gifts are given as per the means of the devotee.

Although this *vrata* is not found to be performed at the present time yet it carries a high value from different aspects. It is the first *vrata* which is discussed in *Matsyapurāṇa* and this is performed by a woman. Hence preference is given to the woman through this *vrata*. At the end of the *vrata* it is said that the devotee can gifts according to its means.⁷⁴ This shows the flexibility of the *vrata* by which a poor devotee also can perform it.

7. *Ādityaśayanavrata* :

This is also known as *Ādityaśayana śankarārcana* observance⁷⁵. This auspicious *vrata* falls on the Sunday when there is *Samkrānti* and also on the seventh day of dark fortnight when the moon is in the *Hasta Nakṣatra*.⁷⁶ In this *vrata* Śiva is shown as non different from the Āditya and consequently the devotee uttering the mantras addressing Āditya worships Śiva.⁷⁷ The 55th Chapter of *Matsyapurāṇa* discussed the *Ādityaśayana vrata* elaborately. This

vrata is observed by both man and woman. By observing this *vrata* the devotee attains divine facility and remains free from all diseases, grieves and sufferings.⁷⁸ The *Matsyapurāṇa* describes the procedure of observing this *vrata* thus:

One who wants to observe this *vrata* should worship Maheśvara and Umā. Reciting the names of the Āditya he also worships the Sun on a *Śivaliṅga* of Śiva. Lord Śiva is non-different from Sūrya and hence Śiva is worshipped with the *mantra sūryāya namaḥ*. The mantras are also chanted for different limbs honouring different Nakṣatras starting with *Hastā Citrā* etc.⁷⁹ The devotee, during this *vrata*, does not take oil, flesh, green vegetables, and take food only at night. On the *Punarvasu Nakṣatra* the devotee offers rice along with clarified butter to the *brāhmaṇa* in a vessel made of fig-leaves putting there some gold. On the 7th year of the fast the devotee gives gifts of a pair clothes to *brāhmaṇa*. On completion of the 14th year the *brāhmaṇa* is offered molasses, milk, and clarified butter. And after that the devotee give golden lotus along with gems, bed sheets, pillow, shoes, utensils, *cāmara* etc. to the needy *brāhmaṇa*. A cow is also given to the *brāhmaṇa* on that occasion. And then the Sun is prayed for getting lustre, fortune, and prosperity⁸⁰.

This *vrata* is also found treated in the same way in the *Padmapurāṇa*.⁸¹ No reference of the prevalence of this *vrata* in the present day society is found by us. It is not known whether this *vrata* is observed in any part of India.

A Short Description of Some another Important Vratas :

In the 56th Chapter of *Matsyapurāṇa* greatness of *Kṛṣṇāṣṭamī vrata* is described. This *vrata* is observed in *Aṣṭamī tithi* of *Kṛṣṇāpakṣa* (eighth day of dark fortnight) in the month of *Mārgaśīrā* for getting victory, peace and emancipation. The devotee worships Śiva by uttering in twelve different names in different months for one year.⁸² The devotee gives feast to the learned and pious *brāhmaṇas* and at the conclusion of the *vrata* curds, grain, canopy and *cāmara* are given in charity. *Brāhmaṇas* are also given five gems with a vase of water, black cow, gold and clothes.⁸³ In case of poor devotee only a cow is to be given instead of all.⁸⁴ As *Kṛṣṇāṣṭamī tithi* is mainly observed for Lord Kṛṣṇa but in this *vrata*

Lord Śiva is worshipped and this is ingenious way of bringing about synthesis between the followers of Śiva and Kṛṣṇa and vice versa.

In the Chapter 60 of *Matsyapurāṇa* the *Saubhāgyaśayana vrata* is described. This *vrata* is observed on the third day of bright fortnight of the month of *Caitra*.⁸⁵ The devotee taking bath with sesamum oil, worships Śiva and Pārvatī with flowers, fruits, incense etc. Then the image of Gaurī is bathed with *pañcagavya*⁸⁶. The limbs of Śiva is worshipped chanting mantras with his different names⁸⁷. After worshipping Śiva the devotee places eight objects like *ghee*, milk which generates the *Saubhāgya* before Śiva.⁸⁸ On the next morning the devotee takes bath and thereafter offers clothes garlands, ornaments etc. to *brāhmaṇa* and his consort. This worship should be performed for a year.⁸⁹ This vow is the giver of all bliss. This vow can be observed by the male and female observers. It is also ordained that any one fruit should be given up by the observer who performs this *vrata*. The performer of this *vrata* attains all his desired fruits and in the end archives the feet of Brahman

The 62nd Chapter of *Matsyapurāṇa* deals with the *Gaurīṭṛtiyāvratā*. This *vrata* is observed in *Bhādra*, *Vaiśākha* or the holy *Mārgaśīrṣa*, on the third day of bright fortnight. After taking bath the devotee puts a *tilaka* on his/her forehead of a paste which is made from cowdung, urine of cow and sandal mixed with curd. Then the devotee bathes the goddess Gaurī with *pañcagavya*, milk and honey and thereafter worships with flowers sandal, fruits, salt, jaggary, butter etc. Then salutation is made chanting the mantras with the different names of Gaurī. Observing this *vrata* the devotee can be rid of all his sins. And the devotee becomes healthy and wealthy.⁹⁰ Poor peoples who observes this *vrata* for three years and chants mantras offering flowers also gain the same fruit.⁹¹

Chapter 82 of *Matsyapurāṇa* narrates *Viṣokadvādaśīvrata*. This *vrata* concentrates on the glorification of the cow. Goddess fortune that is amongst men and gods is in the cow. She is prayed here to confer mental peace.⁹² Lakṣmī of Viṣṇu, Rudrāni of Śiva, Svahā of Agni, Brahmani of Brahmā, Bhadra of Kubera, Svadhā of the pitṛs and the female power of Sūrya, Candra and Indra are all present in the cow⁹³. *Viṣokadvādaśīvrata* is the dispeller of all sins

and is auspicious. The devotee attains longevity, prosperity and good health from it.

The number of vratas described in the *Matsyapurāṇa* is extremely large. Therefore attempt is made here to describe only a few vratas elaborately. Other vratas of *Matsyapurāṇa* are presented in a tabular form here so that a fair idea of all these vratas can be attained at a glance.

Name of the vrata	Gods/ Goddess worshipped	Day, <i>tithi</i> or time of observing	Fruits of the vrata
<i>Rasakalyānīṭṭiyā vrata</i> ⁹⁴	Gaurī	3 rd day of lunar fortnight of <i>Māgha</i>	Becomes liberated from sin
<i>Śuklatṛīyāvratā</i> ⁹⁵	Bhavānī	3 rd day of bright fortnight having the stars <i>Purvāsādhā, Rohiṇī, Mārgaśīrā, Hastā</i> or <i>Mūlā</i>	Good health, longevity, wealth and happiness
<i>Sarasvatī vrata</i> ⁹⁶	Sarasvatī	Any Sunday	Becomes learned, wealthy, and achieves melodious voice
<i>Bhīmadvādāsī vrata</i> ⁹⁷	Mahādeva	12 th day of lunar fortnight of <i>Māgha</i>	Dispels sin.
<i>Aśūnyaśayana vrata</i> ⁹⁸	Keśava	2 nd day of dark fortnight of <i>Śrāvāṇa</i>	Become free from sorrow, blessed with sons wealth etc.
<i>Aṅgarakavratā</i> ⁹⁹	Mars (Aṅgaraka)	4 th day of bright fortnight which fall on Tuesday	Handsome and brings goodluck
<i>Viśokasaptamī</i> ¹⁰⁰	Sūrya	7 th day of bright fortnight in the month of <i>Māgha</i> .	Attains bliss, stays far from sorrow and also from disease
<i>Phalāsaptamī vrata</i> ¹⁰¹	Sūrya	7 th day of bright fortnight in the month of <i>Mārgaśīrā</i>	Gets endless fruits, becomes liberated from sins.
<i>Sarkarāsaptamī vrata</i> ¹⁰²	Sūrya	7 th day of bright fortnight in the month of <i>Vaiśākha</i>	Removes disease, makes the sons and grandsons thrive
<i>Kamalasaptamī vrata</i> ¹⁰³	Sūrya	7 th day of bright fortnight of the spring season	Gives inexhaustible wealth
<i>Mandārasaptamī vrata</i> ¹⁰⁴	Sūrya	7 th day of bright fortnight in the month of <i>Māgha</i>	Fulfill all desires, destroys of sin
<i>Śubhasaptamī vrata</i> ¹⁰⁵	Prāśana	7 th day of bright fortnight in the month of <i>Āśvina</i>	Gives wealth and renowned life in each birth
<i>Viśokadvādāśī vrata</i> ¹⁰⁶	Viṣṇu	12 th day of <i>Āśvina</i>	Gives prosperity and saves man from all evils

<i>Ādityavāravrata</i> 107	Sūrya	Sunday on <i>Hasta</i> <i>Nakṣatra</i>	Peace, good health, everlasting benefits
<i>Vibhūtidvādaśī</i> <i>vrata</i> ¹⁰⁸	Viṣṇu	12 th day of bright fortnight in the month of <i>Kārtika</i> , <i>Caitra</i> and <i>Vaiśākha</i>	Dispels sin, leads to heaven.

Besides these 101st Chapter of *Matsyapurāṇa* has given glimpses of 60 different vratas. These are observed in order to reduce the great sins. A few of them are: *Devavrata*, *Rūdravrata*, *Lilāvratā*, *Pṛitivrata*, *Gaurīvrata*, *Kāmavrata*, *Śivavrata*, *Saumyavrata* etc.

Conclusion :

From the foregoing discussion it is clear that vratas occupied important place among the religious rites performed by the people of the time of *Matsyapurāṇa*. The *Purāṇa* contains the descriptions of the largest no of vratas and upavāsas. It is clear from the description of vratas that the *Matsyapurāṇa* supply these as the substitutes of Vedic sacrifices which are very difficult to perform and which are meant only for the three upper castes. But vratas found in the *Matsyapurāṇa* can be performed by even the śudras and women. From the social point of view it is thus clear that the *vrata* in the *Matsyapurāṇa* is not just an oblation to gods and goddesses, rather it is directly concerned with the social and moral life. Each and every *vrata* is depicted with utmost care for the society. Through the saṅkalpa of a *vrata* one not only starts the *vrata* but also ropes himself with all good things and stays away from all bad things. The regular bath, which is instructed for almost all vratas of *Matsyapurāṇa*, indicates the value of external purity. Fast is a way of gaining internal purity which refresh one's body. This is the central point of all vratas of *Matsyapurāṇa*. When one observes a *vrata* it increases the self control. The internal purity also comes from penance in the form of chanting mantras and worshipping gods etc. There are hardly any *vrata* which runs without worship and without chanting any *mantra*. *Dāna* is shown as the most necessary part of *vrata* in the *Matsyapurāṇa*. Without it *vrata* remains incomplete and fruitless. The vratas of *Matsyapurāṇa* bears great social value through *dāna* which is based on *dayā*, *tyāga*, and *samatā*. It is clearly mentioned in the *Saṅkrāntivrata* that donation should be made to poor or to needy

brāhmaṇa only. The ethics of the *dāna* consist in the fact that it benefits both the giver and receiver. *Dāna* can work for reducing the poverty, and produce equality in the society. It can be also noticed that almost all the vratas *dāna* is made to the *brāhmaṇa* caste only. The reason of this may be that as at that time *brāhmaṇas* were not permitted to do menial works so they had to depend on the donation of others. In this way they were encouraged to remain engrossed in the spread of education which was their main duty. Another important thing about *dāna* mentioned in the *Matsyapurāṇa* is that though donation of many costly things like gold, silver, jewels etc. are enjoined here, alternatives for the poor people are also prescribed here. In this way poor people are also prescribed enabled to perform vratas. Thus *vrata* promotes social harmony among all castes.

References :

- ¹ Williams M.M, *Sanskrit English Dictionary*, p. 1042
- ² Kane, P.V., *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol. V, Pt. I, Ch.1, p. 5
- ³ Cf. *viṣṇoḥ karmāṇi paśyata yato vratāni paspaśe/ indrasya yuija sakhā/ / Ṛgvedasamhitā*, 1.22.19
- ⁴ *tvamagne vratapā asi deva ā martyeṣvā/ tvam yajñeṣvīḍya/ / Ṛgvedasamhitā*, 8.11.1
- ⁵ Cf. *Atharvaveda*, 20.25.5
- ⁶ *vratamīti karmaṇāma vṛṇōtīti vārayatīti sataḥ/ idamaṭitaradvratametasmādeva nivṛttikarma/ varayatīti sataḥ/ / annamāpi vratamucyate yadāvṛṇōti śarīram/ , Nīrukta*, 2.4.1
- ⁷ Cf. *vrate/ / Aṣṭādhyāyī*, 3.2.80; *mantra śvetavahokyaśaspuroḍāśo ṇvin/ / Ibid* 3.2.71
- ⁸ Cf. *Mahābhārata*, *Vanaparva*, 296.3 ; *Udyogaparva*, 39.71-72
- ⁹ *vratamīti ca mānasam karmocycate/ idam na kariṣyāmīti yaḥ saṅkalpaḥ/ katamattad vratam / / Śābarabhāṣya* ,VI. 2. 20
- ¹⁰ *evam śrautasamartāni karmānyabhīdhāyēdānīm grhashtasya snānādārabhya brāhmaṇasyāvasyakartavyāni vidhipratīśedhātmakāni mānasasaṅkalparūpāni snātakavratānyāha/ na svādhyāya/ / Mitākṣara on Yājñavalkyaśmṛti*, 1.129.
- ¹¹ *ekāhenāpi yadbhānoḥ pūjyāḥ prāpyate phalam/ yathoktadakṣiṇairviprairna tatkratuśatairapi/ / Brahmapurāṇa*, 29.61
- ¹² *Agnipurāṇa*, 175.12- 17
- ¹³ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴ *upavāseṣvaśaktasya tadeva phalamicchataḥ/ anabhyāsenā rogādvā kmiṣṭam vratamuttamam/ / Matsyapurāṇa*. 55.1

- ¹⁵ *upavāse'pyaśaktānām naktam bhojanāmiṣyate/ Ibid., 55.2*
- ¹⁶ Cf. Kane, P.V., *History of Dharmasāstra*, Vol. V, Pt. I, Ch.4, p.82
- ¹⁷ *idaṁ vratam mayā deva gr̥hītaṁ puratastava/ nirvighnam siddhimāpnotu prasanne tvayi keśava// gr̥hīte'smin vrāte deva yadyapūrne mriyāmyaham/ tanme bhavatu sampurnam tvat prasāda jjanārdana// Garuḍapurāṇa , 1.121.2, 3*
- ¹⁸ Vide. Kane, P.V., *History of Dharmasāstra*, Vol. V., Pt. I, Ch. 5, pp.120, 121
- ¹⁹ *Padmapurāṇa*, 4.84.42-44
- ²⁰ *Ayana* is the time of the stay of the Sun in the northern or southern hemisphere. Vide. *Viṣṇūpurāṇa*, 2.8.65
- ²¹ *Matsyapurāṇa*, 143.33-34
- ²² *sā tathā kṛttikopetā viśeṣeṇa supūjitā/ tatra dattam hutam japtam sarvamaṅśyamucyate/ / Ibid., 65.3*
- ²³ *Ibid.*, 65.2
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, 65.3, 4
- ²⁵ *ṭṛtiyāyām samabhyarcya sopavāso janārdanam/ rājasūyaphalam prāpyagatimagryāṅca vindati / / Ibid., 65.7*
- ²⁶ *vaiśākhaśuklatṛtiyāmupoṣito'kṣataiḥ śrīvāsudevamabhyarcya/ tāveva hutvā datvā ca sarvapāpebhyaḥ puto bhavati/ / yacca tasmīnnahani prayaccha tadakṣayamāpnoti/ / Viṣṇusmṛti, II. 90.17,18*
- ²⁷ Kane, P.V., *History of Dharmasāstra*, Vol. V, Pt. I, Ch. 4, p. 88
- ²⁸ *Vāmaṇapurāṇa*, 50.3-6
- ²⁹ Cf. *Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. IV, p. 483
- ³⁰ *anena vidhinā yastu kuryācchivacaturdaśim/ so'śvamedhasahasrasya phalamāpnotimānavah/ / Matsyapurāṇa*, 95.32.
- ³¹ *brahmanahatyādikaṁ kiñcidyadatrāmutra vā kṛtam/ pitṛbhīrbrāhṛtṛbhīrvāpi tatsarvaṁnāśamāpnuyāt/ / Ibid., 95.33.*
- ³² *dirghāyurārōgyakulānnavrddhi ratrākṣayāmutra caturbhujatvam/ gaṇādhipatyam divi kalpakotīśatānyuṣitvā padameti śambhoḥ/ / Ibid., 95.34*
- ³³ *yā vātha nārī kurūtetī bhaktvā bhartāramāpṛcchya sutān gurun vā/ sāpi prasādātparameśvarasya parampadam yāti pinākapāṇeh/ / Ibid., 95.37*
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, 95.32
- ³⁵ *...prārthayeddeveśa'tvāmaham saraṇam gataḥ, caturdaśyām nirāhāraḥ samyagabhyarcya samkaram/ suvarṇavṛṣabham dattvā bhokṣyāmi ca pare'haniḥ/ / Ibid., 95.6*
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, 95.9-13
- ³⁷ *tatastu vṛṣabham haimamudakumbhasamanvitam/ śuklamālyāambaradharam pañcaratnasamanvitam/ bhakṣyairnānāvichairyuktam brāhmaṇāya nivedayet/ / Ibid., 95.14*
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, 95.18-22
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, 95.21,22
- ⁴⁰ *arkapuṣpaiḥ kadambaiśca śatapatrya tathotpalaiḥ/ ekaikena*

caturdaśyorarcayetpārvatīpatim // Vide, 95.24

- ⁴¹ Cf. *ḥṛtvā nilavṛṣotsargaṃ śrutiyukta vidhinā naraḥ / umāmaheśvaraṃ haimaṃ vṛsabhañca gavā saha / muktāphalāṣṭakayutaṃ sitanetrapatavṛtām / sarvopaskarasaṃyuktāṃ śayyāṃ dadyāt sakumbhakām* // *Ibid.*, 95.26, 27
- ⁴² *Agnipurāṇa*. 192.2-3
- ⁴³ *Liṅgapurāṇa*, 83.13.54
- ⁴⁴ Kane, P.V., *History of Dharmasāstra*. Vol. V, Pt. I, Ch. 11, p. 211
- ⁴⁵ *ayane viṣuve vāpi saṃkrāntivratamācaret / pūrvedyurekabhaktena dantadhāvanapurvakam / saṃkrāntivāsare prāstailaiḥ snānaṃ vidhīyate*. // *Matsyapurāṇa*, 98.2
- ⁴⁶ Cf. *yāvanmahendrapramukhaimagendraiḥ: pṛthvī ca saptābdhiyuteha tiṣṭhet / tāvatsagandharvagaṇairāśeṣaiḥ saṃpūjyate nārada! nākapṛṣṭhe* // *Ibid.*, 98.13.
- ⁴⁷ *dvijāya sodakumbhañca ghṛtapātram hiraṇmayam / kamalañca yathāśaktyā kārayitvā nivedayet*. // *Ibid.*, 98.7
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 98.3-8
- ⁴⁹ *nakṣatrapuruṣaṃ nāma vrataṃ nārāyaṇātmakam / pādādi kuryādvidhivat viṣṇūnāmānukīrtanam* // *Matsyapurāṇa*, 54.7
- ⁵⁰ Cf. *pādaḥ mūlam tu jaṅghe ca rohiṇī jānuni tathāscinyah / uru cāśāḍha dvayamatha guhyaṃ phalguṇī dvitayam / kaṭirapi ca kṛttikā pārśvayośca yamalā bhavanti bhadrāpadāḥ / kuṣṣisthā revatyō vijñeyamuro' nurādhā ca / pṛṣṭham vidhī dhanisthā bhūjau bisākhā smṛtau karau hastaḥ / āṅgalyaśca punarvasurāśleṣā sañjñitāśca nakhāḥ / grīvā jeṣṭhā śraṇaṇaṃ śraṇaṇau puṣyo mukham dvijāḥ svātīḥ / hasitam satabhisagatha nāsikā maghā mṛgaśīro netre / citrā lalāta saṃsthā śīro bharanya sīroruhā ścādra / nakṣatrapuroṣako' yam kartavyo rūpamicchadbhiḥ* // *Bṛhat Saṃhitā, Rūpasatrādhyāyaḥ*, 1-5
- ⁵¹ *Matsyapurāṇa*, 54.29, 30
- ⁵² *nakṣatrapuruṣākhyaṃ hi vratānāmuttamaṃ vratam / pūrva kṛtam hi bhṛgunā sarvapātaka nāśanam* // *Vāmaṇapurāṇa*, 80.30
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*, 80.36, 37
- ⁵⁴ *Matsyapurāṇa*, 54.9-19
- ⁵⁵ *manoratham naḥ saphalīkuruṣva hiraṇya garbhāchyutarūdrarūpin* // *Ibid.*, 54.23
- ⁵⁶ *salakṣmīkamsabhāryāya kañcanaṃ puroṣottamaṃ / śayyāñca dadyānmantrēṇa granthibhedavivarjitaṃ* // *Ibid.*, 54.24
- ⁵⁷ *evaṃ nivedya tatsarvaṃ vastramālyānulepanam / nakṣatrapuruṣajñāya viprāyātha visarjayet* // *Ibid.*, 54.27
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 57.3
- ⁵⁹ *Ṛgvedasāṃhitā*. 1.91.16
- ⁶⁰ *sudro'pi paryābhaktyāpāṣaṇṇḍālāpavarjitaḥ / omāya varadāyātha viṣṇave namḥ* // *Matsyapurāṇa*, 57.6
- ⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 57.6-15
- ⁶² *Ibid.*, 57.7

- ⁶³ *rohiṇīcandramithunam kārayitvā' thakañcanam/ candrahā ṣaḍamgulaḥ kāryo rohiṇīcaturaṅgulā muktāphalāṣṭakayutaṁ sitanetrapaṭāvṛtam/ kṣīrakumbhaopari punaḥ kāmīsyapātrākṣatānvitam/ / dadyānmantrēna pūrvāhne śālīkṣuphalsamyutam/ / Ibid., 57.19, 20*
- ⁶⁴ Kane, P.V., *History of Dharmaśāstra*. Vol. V, Pt. I, Ch.13, pp. 395, 396
- ⁶⁵ *caitramāsi sitepakṣe dvādaśyām niyatavrataḥ/ Matsyapurāṇa, 7.10.(a)*
- ⁶⁶ *yaḥ kuryādvidhīnānena madanadvādaśīmimām/ sa sarvapāpanīrmuktaḥ prāpnoti harisāmyatām/ / ihaloke putrān saubhāgyaphalamasrute/ yaḥ smarāḥ saṁsmṛtviṣṇurānandātmāmāhesvaraḥ/ / Ibid., 7.27,28*
- ⁶⁷ *Matsyapurāṇa*, ed. H.H. Wilson, Vol. I, p. 33
- ⁶⁸ *Matsyapurāṇa*, 7.10.(b), 11
- ⁶⁹ *nānābhakṣyasamopetaṁ sahirāṇyantu śaktitaḥ/ tāmrāpātraṁ guḍopetaṁ tasyopari niveśayet/ / Ibid., 7.12*
- ⁷⁰ *tasmādupari kāmantu kadaliḍalasaṁsthitam/ kuryyādbhāryādvayopetaṁ ratīm tasya vāmataḥ/ / Ibid., 7.13*
- ⁷¹ The *Matsyapurāṇa* enjoins thus : After pronouncing *Om kāmaya namaḥ* worship the feet, After pronouncing *Om saubhāgyadaya namaḥ* worship the legs, After pronouncing *Om smarāya namaḥ* worship the thighs, After pronouncing *Om manmathāya namaḥ* worship the waist, After pronouncing *Om svaschodarāya namaḥ* worship stomach, After pronouncing *Om anaṅgāya namaḥ* worship the breast, After pronouncing *Om padmamukhāya* worship the mouth, After pronouncing *Om pañcaśarāya namaḥ* worship the hands, After pronouncing *Om sarvatmane namaḥ* worship the head. *Matsyapurāṇa*, ed. H.H. Wilson, Vol. I, p. 31
- ⁷² *Matsyapurāṇa*, 7.20
- ⁷³ *viprebhyobhojanāmdadyādvittāśāṭhyaṁ vivarjayet/ ikṣudandānathodadyāt*
- ⁷⁴ *Ibid.*26.(b)
- ⁷⁵ *ādityasayanam nāma yathāvacchaṅkārārcanam/*
- ⁷⁶ *yadā hastena saptamyāmādityasya dinam bhavet/ suryyārcyām cātha samkrāntistithiḥ sā sārvaśānti/ / Ibid., 55.4*
- ⁷⁷ *umāpatervervāpi na bhedo dṛṣyatekvacit/ yasmāttasmānmunīśreṣṭha grheśāmbhu samarjayet/ / Ibid., 55.6*
- ⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 55.31
- ⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 55.7-15
- ⁸⁰ *yathāivādityasayanamasūnyam tava sarvadā/ kāntā dhṛtyā śrīyā ratyā tathā me santu siddhyaḥ/ / Ibid., 55.26*
- ⁸¹ *Padmapurāṇa*, V.24.64-96
- ⁸² *Matsyapurāṇa*, 56.2-6
- ⁸³ *Ibid.*, 10
- ⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 11
- ⁸⁵ *vasantamāsamāsādyā tṛtīyāyām janapriya/ śuklapakṣasya pūrvāhne tilaiḥ snānam samācaret/ / Ibid., 60.14*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 60.16,17

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 18, 19

⁸⁸ The eight blessings consisting of the eight things viz. clarified butter, *nīspāva* saffron, cow's milk, cuminseed, sugarcane, salt and coriander seed. *Matsyapurāṇa*, ed. H.H. Wilson, p.283

⁸⁹ *Matsyapurāṇa*, 60.32

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* 62.34.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 37

⁹² *yā lakṣmīḥ sarvabhūtānām yā ca deveṣvavasthītā/ dhenurūpeṇa sā devī mama śāntīm prayacchatu/ / Ibid.*82.11

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 13-15.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 63

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 64

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 66

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 69

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 71

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 72

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 75

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 76

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 77

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 78

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 79

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 80

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 81

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 97

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 99

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