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THE GARUDA PURANA

Compiled By : Sanjay Ganjoo

The Garuda Purana is a sattvika purana. The others in this group are Vishnu Purana, Narada Purana, Bhagavata Purana, Padma Purana and Varaha Purana.

The Garuda Purana has nineteen thousand shlokas. It is a medium-sized Purana. The Skanda Purana, for example, has eighty-one thousand shlokas and the Markandeya Purana only nine thousand. The thousand shlokas of the Garuda Purana are divided into two parts, a purva khanda (first part) and an utara khanda (subsequent part). Each khanda has several chapters (adhyaya). The purva khanda is much longer, it has two hundred and thirty-four chapters. The Utara khanda has only forty-five.

The abridged version of Garuda Purana contains a conversation between Bhagwaan Shree Vishnu ji & his Vahana Shree Garuda Dev ji about the death, afterlife, sin, life in hell, location of hell, Yama the lord of the underworld, his assistant Chitragupta, description of city of yama, the various kinds of punishments meted out to the sinners, how to avoid sin upon earth, explanation of sin, what type of funeral rites should be performed for the departed and what happens when they are not performed and so on. The Hindu concept of haven and hell described in this scripture has some similarities with the description of haven and hell in other religions such as Christianity, Islam and Zoroastrianism. However unlike in these religions, souls who go to these world do not stay there eternally. Once punishment is over, they return to earth and take birth again. This Purana also deals with the subject of liberation and how it can be attained through the practice of yoga and devotion.

Please remember that just like The Bhagavad Gita has come from the ShriMukh of Lord Krishna himself, in the same way the Garuda Purana is told by Lord Vishnu Himself to Garudaji

Garuda's Questions

Garuda once went on a tour of the world. He went to heaven, to the earth and to the underworld. But his mind was not pacified, he was greatly depressed. Because all he saw everywhere was unhappiness. So he returned to vaikunthaloka, the place where Vishnu lives.

Vaikunthaloka was a very nice place. Vishnu's companions were handsome to look and wore pretty clothes. They rode on vimanas. The goddess Lakshmi was there with all her companions. Vishnu sat there on his throne. His visage was calm, his face was smiling and he had four arms. Garuda bowed down before Vishnu.

How are you Garuda? asked Vishnu. What are the places to which you have travelled?

I have travelled everywhere except to Yama's abode, replied Garuda. But I have many questions for which I want answers. Why are beings born on earth? And why do they die? What happens to the senses once people die? Where do men go after they die? Why is a shraddha ceremony performed? When the physical body dies, what happened to the papa or punya that the person had acquired? What exactly is death? Please tell me the answers to these questions.

Vishnu replied to some of these questions.

It is important to have a son so that the line may go on. A person who has no son goes to the hell punnama. That is why a son is called a putra. He rescues (trana) his father and his other ancestors from punnama naraka, the hell named put.

When a person dies, Yama's messengers (yamaduta) come to take him to Yama. Yama's messengers are terrible of appearance and they hold sticks and clubs in their hands. The atman leaves the dead physical body and adopts a very small form, as long as a finger. In this form, the dead person is taken to Yama's abode. The actions performed in one's life (karma) determine what is going to happen to a dead person thereafter. He is first sent to hell to serve out his sentence for the sins he has committed. Thereafter, he is born again. And what he is born as depends on the karma of the earlier life.

To take care of different types of sinners, there are different narakas.

The most important naraka is rourava, reserved for those who lie or bear false witness. The hell has a long expanse and is full of huge pits. These pits are full of burning coal. The sinner is let loose at one end of the hell and is made to walk to the other end. Naturally, he keeps falling into the pits and gets severely burnt. When he reaches the other end of the hell, he is released from rourava. He then goes to other hells if there are other sins to be accounted for.

Another hell is named maharourava. It is covered with burning sands. The fires that burn there are so bright that they hurt the sinner's eyes. The sinner's hands and feet are tied and he is thrown into the hell. There he burns. To compound his miseries, the hell is populated by fierce crows, vultures, wolves, mosquitoes and scorpions. These bite him and sting him and eat his flesh as he burns. After several years spent in maharourava, sinners are released.

Unlike rourava and maharourava, the hell named atishita is extremely cold. There is no light there and everything is in total darkness. The only heat that sinners can generate is by clinging on to each other's bodies. There are hailstorms which make the skin smart. And there is no food to eat. To satisfy their hunger, the sinners end up eating each other's flesh and blood and bones.

The hell named nikrintana is quite different. There sinners are tied to stakes and their bodies are sliced with sharp chakras. The slicing begins with the feet and then moved up the body to the head and then again starts with the feet. The tragic part of this is that the sinners do not die in the process. For as soon as a part of their body is join up again. Thus a sinner does not die, but continues to endure the misery. And so it continues for a thousand years before there is release.

A hell named apratishtha is a place where sinners are whirled round and round until they begin to vomit blood and their intestines come out of their mouths.

Asipatravana naraka is a huge expanse. The edges of the hell are extremely hot and there is a grove of trees in the centre. The centre is also cooler. The sinners are let loose at the edges and they suffer so much from the heat that they dash towards the centre. As I means sword and patra is the blade of a sword. Vana is a forest. The hell is so named because the trees in the grove have leaves that are as sharp as the blades of swords. When sinners dash into the grove, their flesh is sliced with the leaves of the trees. And the grove is also full of fierce dogs which immediately eat up the torn flesh.

Next is the hell named taptakumbha. This has hot (tapa) pots (kumbha). The pots are full of boiling oil. The sinners are hung upside down inside these pots and roasted. And while they are being boiled in oil, vultures tear apart whatever portions of their bodies continue to be exposed.

There are many hells. But the seven major ones are the ones that have just been described rourava, maharourava, atishita, nikrintana, apratishtha, asipatravana and taptakumbha.

All the hells are located under the earth. The hells are so terrible that a single day there seems like a

hundred years on earth. Imprisonment in any naraka is for a fixed term. When all these tenures in different hells are over, it is time for the sinner to be born again. And what he is born as is determined by the karma of his earlier life. The greater the sins he committed in his earlier life, the more inferior the form he is born as. And so the cycle of birth, atonement and rebirth continues.

Rewards for punya are received in heaven. But these rewards are not forever. Once the term is over, the person has to be reborn.

From Death to Cremation

When a person dies, his sons will first bathe the dead body and then clothe it in a single piece of cloth. The body is rubbed with sandalwood paste. The sons then perform a rite known as ekodishta. This gives the right to cremate the dead body. The rite can be performed at the place of death, the door of the house, the courtyard, the place where the dead body is resting, the cremation ground or on the funeral pyre itself.

The sons will carry sesamum, sacrificial grass (kusha), clarified butter and wood with them to the cremation ground. And on the way to the cremation ground, hymns to Yama will be sung.

At the shmashana (cremation ground), another religious rite is observed. A funeral pyre is made. The clothing that the dead person is wearing is torn into two. The body is draped with half and the remaining half is left in the shmashana for the ghost (preta). Oblations (pinda) are offered to the dead man and clarified butter is sprinkled on the corpse. The dead body is then placed on the funeral pyre with the head facing the south.

The fire is lit with the words, Great Lord Agni, take this person to heaven.

When the body is half-burnt, mantras are chanted and sesamum and clarified butter sprinkled on the funeral pyre. This is the time to start weeping for the dead. The ghost feels good if it hears these sounds of mourning. After the body is completely burnt, the sons offer oblations to the dead and circle the funeral pyre. They then go to have a bath. And while they have their bath, they must continue to say good things about the dead person. Water is then taken in cupped palms and offered to the dead man. This is known as tarpana (gratification) and tarpana is performed once, thrice or ten times. The wet clothes are changed after the tarpana is over.

One must not sorrow over the dead person after the tarpana and after the dead body has been burnt. Such mourning merely makes the ghost (preta) get attached to its earlier life, and serves no purpose. If necessary, learned men can be called to discourse on the transience of the physical body and the inevitability of death. This gives comfort. On returning home from the cremation ground, sacred objects must be touched first of all.

A child under two years of age is not cremated. The dead body is buried.

A wife can immolate herself on her husband's funeral pyre. This brings great punya. She spends as many years in heaven as there are hairs on her body. She even rescues her husband from hell, no matter what sins her husband may have committed. The husband joins the wife in heaven. This sort of immolation is always recommended except when the woman happens to be pregnant. So says the Garuda Purana.

There are some cases where cremation ceremonies are not to be performed, nor are the dead offered pinda or tarpana. Such people have to suffer in hell. These are instances of deaths rising from wild animals, fire, cholera, poison, snake-bites, lightning, or outright suicides. Funeral ceremonies performed in such cases do more harm than good. A special religious rite has to be arranged for such deaths. This is known as narayanavali. It is only if this is done that the dead person does not have to go to hell. In the case of snake-bite leading to death, the golden image of a snake has to be given to a brahman along with a cow. Then the dead body is covered with palasha leaves and other sacred objects. Then it burnt. This rite is known as sarpavali.

.....to be continued

NINE INCARNATIONS

*Auspicious days of 'Durga' when she descends from the heavens
with a blissful bounty of evens
and with an immortal wallet of joy and prosperity twins...*

*She as eternal mother fondles her children in her love cradle,
lulls them with a love lullaby under the luminescent candle
of knowledge and wisdom and compassion to kindle...*

*With the birth of love and passion she creates a relation of trust,
converts an atheist into a theist of divine bust
and ignites the flame of belief within a skeletal crust...*

*She in her nine incarnations feeds, nourishes and teaches us,
defends, protects and guides us,
absolves our sins, nurses our agonies and blesses us...*

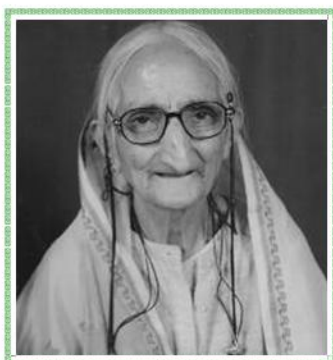
*She as 'MahaShakhti' the ultimate power of universe dilutes our acrimony and acidity,
sprouts a fathomless seed of serenity,
quenches our ignorant thirst and bashes our illiteracy with spirituality...*

*She as 'Sharika', 'Kalika' and 'Raginiya' is the mother with immortal power,
as 'Ambika', 'Laxmi' and 'Oma' blesses her deities with a tranquil shower,
and as 'Chandika', 'Tripura' and 'Sharda' blossoms within as a fragrant
flower...*

*To such a supreme mother, I bow with body and heart
& kneal under Her lotus feet in humble humility, I surrender to her majesty with every pulsating beat
and pray to melt our greed, disobedience and arrogance with radiating warmth and heat...*

Dr. Roshan Saraf

OBITUARY



SMT DHANWATI KOUL (KAKNI)

With profound grief & sorrow, we regret that our beloved mother Smt Dhanwati Koul, lovingly known as Kakni, W/o Lt Sh Gopi Nath Koul, originally resident of Nakash Pora Sathoo, Srinagar, left for her heavenly abode on 8th April, 2011. May God bestow eternal peace to the departed soul. You were a great source of strength, love and compassion to all of us. We wish our sincere thanks & gratitude to all our relatives, friends & well wishers who shared our sorrow and stood by us in this hour of grief.

Deeply missed & fondly remembered by –

Sons & Daughter-in-Laws	Grand Children	Great Grand Children
Krishna & H L Koul	Dr Reeta & Dr C Wattal Anjila & Sanjay Koul Pratibha & Rakesh Moza Jyoti & Kuldip Kaul	Dr Sushant, Shweta Ridhi Kushagra, Tanishq
Sheela & M L Koul	Rakesh Koul Kanchan & Jugal Koul	Barbi, Vriya
Sarla & Dr K L Koul	Dilupa & Ajay Koul Dr Rashi & Dr A Koul	Aditya, Diya Aryan
Shanta & B L Koul	Menu & Ashish Koul Nenu & Depak Kachru	Mehak, Vidhi Advit, Adheiya
Daughters & Son-in-Laws		
	Dr Ranjana & Dr V Raina Lovely & Surender Dhar	Dr Manan, Pichu, Hardik & Harshit (G G Grand Children) Sheen & Shubana
RajDulari W/o Lt S S Gigo	Promila & Gr Capt. V Gigoo Dolly & Rajan Wakhloo	Vikram, Vivek Priya, Nikhil
Krishna & R L Taploo	Pinki & Sunil Koul Paro & Nirupam Das Luba & Avinash Taploo	Sucheta, Ayush Riya, Ridhman Anjlika
Nancy & R L Bhandari	Superna & Parveen Bhandari Abhinav & Bindu Raina	Parth, Shreshti Ishan, Sheen
Shashi & K K Koul	Sudhana & Ashish Punjabi Sarchana & Ashtosh Bakshi	Shereen, Aryan Adaiv

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SHRADDHA & SABURI

The sage of Shirdi, the Sai baba emphasized two virtues for well being, Shraddha or faith & Saburi or patience. The two virtues are complimentary; between them they contain complete code of conduct for life in realization of God.

Shraddha is devotion; it is faith that helps one accept all happenings – the good and bad. The faith makes the disciple trust his Guru and a child its parents. Patience or what we call it as Saburi makes one to overcome urge for instant gratification. It is an art for adhoc management of mental restlessness. It is the intuition that inspires us to just be and wait for the will of the God to unfold and work itself out. Patience /Saburi gives us sacred energy and tolerance to face even all odds without any anger or stress and perhaps makes us to understand that will of God cannot be changed.

There is an example that a tree sheds all its leaves without demur, the tree stands denuded without a sense of shame, despondency or heartbreak. It stands comfortably as ever. It lets the Sun, the Air, the Rain and other weather vagaries to work over it. The tree surrenders to them, not out of helplessness but out of natural calamity, when the season turns tender new leaves dress it up and after that wonderful flowers and fruits grow in due course of that period. This is nothing but the will of god to be accepted quite patiently/”Suburily”.

Faith is the insight that teaches us to have patience and surrender to the will of God which is the best course, our life can take. From adopting faith and patience (Shraddha & Saburi) one’s wisdom gets richer and richer. Patience is born of faith and in due course it serves to strengthen faith.

Faith and patience are intricately woven. Asking which comes first patience or faith. It perhaps is the similar to asking which came first the egg or the chicken. It depends on an individual’s spiritual configuration as to which path suits him best; faith or patience, whichever route one may begin with, the two paths keep twinning and finally both converge towards common goal. Kill such desires/enterprises which are inspired by sheer greed for material gain – unrelated to honest need.

Greed is contra to life and nature. No tree competes with its neighbor to double its output just to outperform the other.

The supreme energy in life is self realization. Patience and faith support it and make the path smooth and hurdle free. So Shraddha & Saburi are quite interlinked and has eternal power and imparts us with spiritual will to surrender that is our Saibaba’s message to humanity.

Er. I. K. KOUL

Flat no. 24, GH – 11

Sector – 5 MDC Panchkula

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REFRACTION IN JEHLUM

*Jehlum is the aorta of Kashyap Valley,
irrigating and oxygenating
anatomy of its banks and belly...*

*A serpent river created by the God
in the tarn bossom and purified
with dew of nectar from the auspicious pod...*

*Lord had no choice but to send in
the incarnated 'Ma Sharda' as the
Supreme Mother to bash the sinner and the sin...*

*Besides the intoxicating breeze of flowing beauty
and under the cool shade of mighty Chinar,
sages and saints meditated and attained divinity...*

*Purity and holiness of sacred Jehlum
can be ascertained by finding temples and shrines
on its dewy banks as an ethical and religious emblem...*

*During the hot summer, it refrigerates the radiant rays
of sun and at night embraces the milky moon
in a scenic reflection to earn an awesome praise...*

*But I am talking of yester years; 'Jehlum cries,
sobs, inures, shrieks as on today'
and complains of ethnic rubble, she decries...*

*She is a lump of rubbish now, can't respire,
a swampy heap of hatred and prejudice,
can't whisper its aches, even her bossom is on fire...*

*She wants to weep but her tears
are washed away by the gushing
whirlpool of refractive fears...*

*She with her numb and fumbling limbs is unable
to feel the shimmer and cool ripples of its cultural density,
she is cursed by a 'black witch' making her dull and uncharitable...*

*She in her nostalgic murmur says -"I was young at ninety,
a virgin in purity, heaven's antiquity
but now I am a marsh of prejudice fluidity"...*

Dr. Roshan Saraf

Matrimonial

- * Alliance invited for Ashish Kakroo 5ft 10 inch born 09-06-1983, B. E. Electrical, MBA Marketing, Asstt. Manager, Procurement, Essar Power Gujrat Ltd, Jamnagar, Handsome Package. Contact Mr. Virender Kakroo Saini Vihar, Baltana, Zirakpur, Distt. Mohali, Punjab. (Mobile 08901055740, 09814060106.)
- * Alliance invited for Sundeep Miya 5ft 6 inch born 12th Feb 1981 bachelor in computer application (B.C.A) working in Mahindra Tech. Contact Mrs. Bimla Miya Noida U.P (Mobile 09810169438) Panchkula 9041511500
- * Alliance invited for Aneesha Miya 5ft 3 inch born 19th Nov 1983 Bachelor of Physiotherapy. Presently pursuing masters in Physiotherapy. Contact Mrs. Bimla Miya Noida U.P (Mobile 09810169438) Panchkula 9041511500
- * Alliance invited for Dr. Sushant Wattal 158 cms born 7th Oct 1985 MBBS (Maulana Azad Medical College New Delhi) pursuing MD from Govt Medical College Rajinder Hospital Patiala. Contact Dr. Chand Wattal A – 55 Gyandeepp Apartments, Plot No 8, Mayur Vihar Phase – I, New Delhi (Mobile 09810502899) Email chdw55@gmail.com

Wedding Bells

- **Poorvi Ganjoo D/O Smt. Kusum & Shri. Viny Ganjoo** Saini Vihar Baltana got Married to **Sidharth S/O Smt. Chandra Kanta & Shri Ramesh Kantroo** on 12th Nov 2010. Sabha wishes the couple a happy married Life.
- **Amit S/O Smt. Asha & Shri. S. L. Gigoo** Sector – 14 Panchkula got Married to **Navedita D/O Smt. Meenakshi & Shri Malvinder Bhagat** on 17th Nov 2010. Sabha wishes the couple a happy married Life.
- **Smita D/O Smt. Kiran & Shri. Ravinder Warikoo** Saini Vihar Baltana got Married to **Rahul S/O Smt. Santosh & Shri. D. N. Kaul** on 22nd November 2010. Sabha wishes the couple a happy married Life.
- **Deepa D/O Smt. Pooja & Shri. Pradeep** Dhar Saini Vihar Baltana got Married to **Vicky S/O Smt. Kulwinder & S. A. S. Rehal** on 28th November 2010. Sabha wishes the couple a happy married Life.
- **Rohit S/O Smt. Santosh & Shri. R. K. Zadoo** Power House Colony HMT Pinjore got Married to **Meenakshi D/O Smt. Vijay & Shri B. L. Pandita** on 4th Dec 2010. Sabha wishes the couple a happy married Life.
- **Vishal S/O Smt. Gudie & Shri. P. K. Pandita** Sector – 20 Panchkula got Married to **Shivani D/O Smt. Ratna & Shri R. L. Bhat** on 18th Feb 2011. Sabha wishes the couple a happy married Life.

Change of Address

- ♦ **Shri. K. K. Kaul** Shifted from Dhakoli to 587 Trishla Apartments Peer Muchala, (Pb) behind Sector – 20 Panchkula.
- ♦ **Shri. T. K. Gadroo** Shifted from HMT Pinjore to 594 Trishla Apartments Peer Muchala, (Pb) behind Sector – 20 Panchkula

Get well soon

- ♦ KPS Panchkula wishes speedy recovery to Sh. Vinod Raina # 493 Mamta Enclave Dhakoli Zirakpur

Condolences

- **Sh. M. L. Kaul** father – in – law of **Sh. Avinash Kaul & Sh. Rajesh Kaul** MDC Panchkula expired last month. Sabha conveys its heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and their kith and kin. May the departed soul rest in peace.
- **Smt. Laxmishori Handoo** Mother of **Late Sh. Chaman Lal Handu & Grand mother of Sh. Nikhil Handoo** GH – 17 Sector – 20 Panchkula expired last month. Sabha conveys its heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and their kith and kin. May the departed soul rest in peace.

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