

SYNOPSIS OF THE THESIS

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BRAHMA-PURĀṆA - A CRITICAL STUDY

Statement No.1

How the Present Work tends to the General Advancement of Knowledge:

In purāṇas lies the soul of the whole past times, the articulate audible voice of the past, when the body and material substance of it has altogether vanished like a dream. All that is done, thought, gained or has been; it is lying as the magic preservation in the pages of the purāṇas. They are the chosen possession of Indians.

India is what it is by nature of many factors that have brought it to its present stage. In the formation of Indian mind and life the epics-Mahābhārata and Rāmāyaṇa- and the purāṇas have contributed a major influence. These have been heard and read from generation to generation. One cannot understand the Indian mind and life without being familiar with these works. It, therefore, behoves us to study critically the purāṇas. This is particularly important at this stage of our history, when we want to plan the remoulding of our national life getting firmly rooted in the best aspects of our cultural heritage.

The Brahma-purāṇa is one of the major purāṇas.

It has not been so far critically studied and hence a critical study thereof is overdue. I humbly try to present here my thesis entitled 'Brahma-Purāṇa' + A Critical Study' which may remove this longfelt desideratum. A perusal of the synopsis submitted herewith will give an idea of the subject matter of my thesis and the topics discussed therein.

Another distinguishing feature of the Br. P. is that it deals with the worship of the Sun. Although, the worship of the Sun is not the burden of its song, it does occupy an important place in it and hence some scholars regard it as one of the Saura-Purāṇas.

As Dr. Hazra says the Br. P. is a voluminous work being encyclopaedic in nature and providing rich material for social, religious, philosophical, mythological, political, geographical and literary study. I have analysed the data furnished in the Br. P. and collected it under the various aforesaid heads. I have also made a linguistic analysis and metrical analysis, a study of peculiar grammatical forms and have provided a list of some difficult and obsolete words and Alamkāras. As the geographical aspect of the Br. P. is important I have tried to identify as many places and tribes that occur in it as possible. I have

also made a study from the literary point of view as a result of which it appears that the Br. P. does not seem to be a homogeneous work but consists of three different strata.

The study of Brahma-purāṇa is very useful for comparative studies in mythology, religion, social condition and philosophy. It represents an important stage in showing liberal attitude regarding the mutual relations of Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism. The study of Brahma-purāṇa is particularly fruitful as it is mainly a tīrtha-purāṇa and provides us with a description of the sacred places on the river Godāvarī and in Orissa. Its study thus provides an important contribution to the geography of these places besides giving information about other fields of knowledge which are common to the purāṇas.

It is in this among many other ways that this humble work contributes to the general advancement of knowledge.

Statement No. 2

Sources, indebtedness and Originality:

In the preparation of the present thesis, I have fully drawn upon all the available literature in print in many languages. An acknowledgement has been fully made at the proper places.

I studied the text and the relevant literature
and tried to express my own views after a critical study.