

## CHAPTER I

### CONCEPT OF BOON

The idea of varadāna is met in with the Vedic and Purāṇic literature. The UPs relate a number of stories and dialogues. Some of them have a boon as its motif or a starting point for the development of a story and expounding philosophical doctrines. The motif is a theme or centre of idea around which the whole story is revolved. Motifs are used frequently in folklores. Bhavabhūti in the Mālatī-Mādhava and Kālidāsa in the Śākuntala viz. Bakulmālā and ring respectively, used the technique of motif to develop the plot. Sometimes the motif remains the same in different stories, but some changes are seen in other aspects of motif. In UPs the motif of 'Vara' is used around which philosophical ideas are woven and speculations are drawn. Stith Thompson<sup>1</sup> describes motif thus "It is unusual central theme unaltered in different stories which draws and holds our attention that we call it a motif".

Now coming to the boon-based stories taken up in this study the Vara(o-dāna) motif appears as unchangeable and a very central bulk or cream of the story. As there are two interlocutors, one of them is a granter and the other is a grantee. The bestowal of some reward or gift by a granter to the grantee is a common factor in all

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1. Thompson Stith quoted by Arora Uday Prakash, "Motif in Indian Mythology", Introduction, p.14.

such stories. If Vara (o-dāna), is dropped out from the story, the whole story ends or paralysed.

Moreover, this central theme of Vara (o-dāna) may be unusual so far the philosophical ideas are taken into account. e.g. the vivid picture of "Light : Ātman" presented by Yājñavalkya to Janaka cannot be compared to normal gift of wealth or grants of sons, land etc. Yājñavalkya harmonises the illuminating elements like sun, moon, fire, Ātman in such a way that it remains unparalleled. Every thought of a seer is new and uncommon, so far as the philosophical ideas are concerned.

The philosophical speculations are put in such a practical way that a person is amazed at the Seer's deep vision, intuition in presentation. It makes a man introvert and reflective.

Poets like Kālidāsa, used the concept of 'Vara' in the Raghuvamśa<sup>2</sup> and in the Kumārasambhava<sup>3</sup>. The word Vara (boon) is derived from √vr̥ to desire or to choose i.e. desire or choice which is asked to be fulfilled by god or by a superior person.

2. Kālidāsa, Raghu Vamśa 2.63.

"Prītāsmi te putra varam vṛṇiṣva"

3. Kālidāsa, Kumārasambhava 2.32.

"bhavallabdhah varodīrṇah"

Generally the meaning, of the word 'vara' comes nearer to the word āsīrvāda. The verbal expression of a wish or will that good may befall on someone is a blessing -, an āsīrvāda.<sup>4</sup> Where as a boon is a request or the favour requested became a reality or a factual situation<sup>5</sup>. An āsīrvāda is also a state of good fortune that results from the power of a particular words. The efficacy of blessing rests on the belief in the special potency of inherent in a word or in the utterance of a deity, and direct or indirect as the case may be. The act of blessing implies certain gestures as for example putting one's hand on the head of a person who is to be blessed.

If a superior person gives blessing to a man it becomes true. It is well-known that ancient seer's possessed such remarkable powers, on account of that power whatever they spoke the very speech become a reality. Bhavabhūti makes a statement following this very concept in "Uttara-rāma-caritam".<sup>6</sup>

4. On boon and blessing vide Encyclopaedia of Britannica Vol.III

5. On boon and <sup>blessing</sup> ~~and~~ vide Encyclopaedia of Britannica Vol.III

6. Bhavabhūti, Uttara-rāma-caritam 1.10.

"ṛṣinām punarādyānām vāconurthonudhāvati"

There is a microscopic difference between 'vara' and āśīrvāda, no doubt both the vocables are closely related to some extent semantically but blessing is a mere expression of one's good wish towards someone who is going to be the object of it. "That particular blessing may or may not be realised; while vara is more permanent in character and surer of fulfillment."<sup>7</sup> A vara is realisable. When a man bows down to a ṛṣi or an aged man the ṛṣi immediately utters "may your desire be fulfilled". This particular utterance is nothing but a blessing. A seer wished something good to a man. That good fortune may come into reality or may not come; but when a properly qualified person expresses e.g. (1) May you get a vigorous son<sup>8</sup> these words of the vaikhāṇasa become a boon to Duṣyanta. (2) In the Raghuvamśa 'May you get a son'<sup>9</sup>. This particular wish of a Vararuci ṛṣi happened to be a boon to his disciple viz. Kautsa. It was certain that Duṣyanta and Kautsa will have a son respectively. Thus the boon has certainty. Kālidāsa also distinguishes between vara and āśīrvāda.<sup>10</sup> Āśīrvāda is a general statement. It does not

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7. Gode P.K. and Karve C.G. (ed). Principal Vaman Shivaram Apte, The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary, Part III, p.1390

8. Kālidāsa, Abhijñāna Śākuntala, Act.I, p.8  
"chakravartin putram avāpnuhi"

9. Kālidāsa, Raghuvamśa - 5.34.

10. Kālidāsa, Abhijñāna Śākuntala, Act.IV p.102.

refer to any specific issue. While a boon is a specific declaration which is bound to be true. A vara can be given by a deity or by an seer who has the power to bring about its fulfilment. e.g. Kanva was possessed of <sup>d</sup>Sidhi, therefore his words were happened to prove to be true according to Gautami - "May you have a son, a universal Monarch". It is intended to last identically without change. There is no time element for the purpose of its fulfilment. After its aim is fulfilled it is exhausted. Once a boon exhausts away its purpose it has nothing to fulfil further. A boon implies protection or the protection is a corollary to choice.

*Repetition*

When a boon is given there are two participants. One is <sup>a</sup>granter of the boon and the other is <sup>a</sup>grantee. It is a sort of communication. The granter of the boon is always on a higher level and achievement.

In the UPs we come across a granter who is either a god or a sage or an eminent Brahmin; or a King. On the other hand the grantee is on a lower level in comparison with that of a granter. Hierarchical distinction in terms of caste or class is not a factor with reference to one's being a granter or grantee. The choosing of the boon was not obligatory but the grantee had full liberty or freedom in choice. The Upaniṣadic study of boon shows that a person with an earnest desire for something approaches an alaukikasadhū<sup>12</sup> and expresses his desire which is fulfilled.

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11. Kālidāsa, Abhijñāna Śākuntala 4.7 p.101.

12. A term used by R.D. Karmarkar, Abhijñāna Śākuntala, Notes, p.290.

In some cases the desire is fulfilled without expression. Similarly the desire is not fulfilled though it is expressed. In UPs 'vara' is not an extra-ordinary power but on account of a realisation of metaphysical knowledge the granter offers it to the receiver. He offers to him whatever is expected or desired by him. He never 'pours' more than what is wanted or desired. Sometimes a 'boon' includes the grace of God. It is also known as Anugraha.<sup>13</sup> Anugraha is Dhātuhprasād.<sup>14</sup> ( ŚU 3.20 )

The genesis of the boon ( Vara  $\sqrt{vr}$  ) can be traced to the RV wherein the various verbal forms like  $\text{vrñite}$ ,  $\text{vrñate}$ ,  $\text{vrñimahe}$ ,  $\text{vrñisva}$ ,  $\text{avrñidhvam}$  etc. occur.

The forms like  $\text{vrñimahe}$  (9.66.18),  $\text{vrñe}$  (3.12.3);  $\text{vrñate}$  (1.141.6)  $\text{avrñīta}$  (1.117.13);  $\text{vrñīte}$  (1.67.1) denote the sense of request or asking for or selection. All of them are explained with  $\text{सम् + \sqrt{vr}} \text{ by } \text{sāy}$ .

13. "poṣaṇam tadanugrah" BHP. 2.10.1.

14. ŚU.3.20. Ś.Comm. धातुरीश्वरस्य प्रसादात् । प्रसन्ने हि 'परमेश्वरे' तदायात्म्यज्ञानमुत्पद्यते ; अथवा इन्द्रियाणी धातवः शरीरस्य धारणाय तेषां प्रसादाद्विषय-दोष दर्शनं मातृ दूषणयन्तात् ।

vide. Radhakrishnan S. The Principle Upanishads p.730.

dhātu-prasādāt - "sense organs are said to be dhātu". Ś reads  
dhātuh =  $\text{Īśvarasya}$ . as mentioned.

- 1) In 9.66.18 it implies ' request ', e.g. A seer requests the god to help for defeating enemy etc.
- 2) In 1.141.6 Hota requests Agni with offering of the oblations like a king.
- 3) In 1.117.3 a seer asks to come and sit on, to the <sup>1</sup>Asvins.
- 4) In 1.67.1 and 8.25.13; it implies protection. A seer asks for protection either of their wealth or themselves.
- 5) In 3.12.3, and 3.12.5 <sup>सम् + प्रज्</sup> implies the sense of worship.

15 - A - The verb <sup>vr̥</sup>vr̥nite in the said re 1.67.1 is rendered as ' to protect ' by (say)<sup>1</sup>; " choosing (velankar)<sup>2</sup>; ' demand ' (oldenberg)<sup>3</sup>; desires ( Max Müller )<sup>4</sup>; ' wohlmeinende ' (Geldner)<sup>5</sup>. Skanda<sup>6</sup> and Mudgala agrees with sāy. Veṅkata<sup>7</sup> does not comment. Griffith differs in translation<sup>8</sup>.

- 15 - A 1. Sāy : Com. 1.67.1 <sup>लभन्ते यजमानं दृष्ट्वा समुज्जते । अनेन प्रतं हविः स्वीकृत्य रक्षतीति भावः ॥</sup>
2. JUB, Vol. XXXI ( New series ) Sept. 1962; p.II; p.5. Agni hymns 1-2
  3. Oldenberg H. Agni-Hymns - SBE p.61.
  4. Max Müller - Vedic Hymns , SBE
  5. Geldner Karl F. Der Rig-veda Vol. I Hos 33 p.88 re 1.67.1.
  6. Skanda, Mudgala Com. VVRI part I p.502
  7. Veṅkata - ibid.
  8. Griffith R - Hymns of the Rigveda vol. I p.91

15 - B - 8.25.13 in the said re, it is rendered ' protection ' (sāy)<sup>1</sup> elect (Griffith)<sup>2</sup>; 'erbitten' (Geldner)<sup>3</sup>; Skanda and Mudgala do not comment. Veṅkata<sup>4</sup> follows sāy.

16 - (i) <sup>3.12.3</sup> The said re is rendered as 'request' (sāy)<sup>1</sup>; 'choose' (oldenberg)<sup>2</sup>; "erkure" (Geldner)<sup>3</sup>; Skanda and Mudgala<sup>4</sup> do not explain. Veṅkata does not give parafrasing word for vr̥ne. He keeps the word as it is.

(ii) 3.12.5 , the re is rendered 'worship' by (sāy)<sup>1</sup>; 'choose' (oldenberg)<sup>2</sup>; Skanda and Mudgala<sup>3</sup> do not comment. Veṅkata<sup>3</sup> does not comment; he keeps the word as it is. erbitte (Geldner)<sup>4</sup>.

15 - B 1.1 sāy. comm. on 8.25.13. अस्मदीयस्य अन्नस्य रक्षका भवन्ती रक्षयः ।

2. Griffith R. Hymns of the Rigveda Vol. II p.160.

3. Geldner K. F. Der - Rigveda Hos. Vol. 34. p.334

4. Skanda, Mudgala and Veṅkata; Comm. in VVRI part IV p.2683.

16 - (i) 1. sāy. comm. on 3.12.3 - इन्द्रमाग्निं च युवां वृणे सोमपानार्थं इह कर्मणि -  
अगच्छते इति संभवे ।

2. Oldenberg H. " Agni Hymns " SBE<sup>No. XLVI</sup> p. 263

3. Geldner K.F. Der Rigveda. Hos Vol.33 p.349.

4. Skanda, Mudgala, Veṅkata. Comm. in VVRI part IV. p. 1323.

(ii) 1. sāy. comm. on 3.12.5 - अहमाग्न इषः अन्नस्य कामाद्यै इन्द्राग्निं युवां आ वृणे  
सर्वतः संभवे । पूजयामीत्यर्थः ।

2. Oldenberg H. The Agni Hymns. SBE<sup>No. XLVI</sup> p. 263

3. Skanda, Mudgala and Venkata Comm. in VVRI part III p.1323.

4. Geldner K.F. Der Rigveda, Hos. Vol.33 p. 349.



17 - The verbal forms like *Vṛṇīta* 5.50.1; *Vṛṇīmahe* 10.36.2.7 implies the meaning as "favour", grace.

(i) 5.50.1 the said re is rendered as 'favour' (*sāy*)<sup>1</sup>; "freundschaft" (Geldner)<sup>2</sup>; expect, prosper (*Veṅkata*)<sup>3</sup>; Mudgala agrees with *sāy*.

(ii) 10.36.2-7- It is rendered as "prosper, favour" by (*sāy*)<sup>1</sup>; 'grace' (Griffith)<sup>2</sup>; "erbitten" (Geldner)<sup>3</sup>; Udgitha and *Veṅkata* agrees with *sāy*.<sup>4</sup>

18 - (1) In 10.91.8-9; 5.20.3; 10.33.4 , the verbal forms implies the meaning of choice or selection to illustrate in the 10.91.8-9, the verbal form *Vṛnate* is rendered as 'select' (*sāy*)<sup>1</sup>; 'select' (Griffith)<sup>2</sup>

17 - (1) 1. Say Comm. तस्यानुभवात् सर्वे जनः धनं धुम्नं धनं वृणीत  
पुष्यसे पुष्टये वर्धन्ति धनम् । ( all the people get  
wealth on account of his favour. )

2. Geldner K.F. Der Rigveda, Hos. Vol.34. p.55

3. Skanda, Mudgala and *Veṅkata* Comm.in VVRI Vol.IV p.1810

(ii)1. *Sāy* - comm.10.36-2-7.

2. Griffith - "We crave to day this gracious favour of the gods". Hymns to Rigveda Vol.II p.433.

3. Geldner K.F. Der Rigveda Hos.Vol.35 p.187-188.

4. Skanda, Mudgala, Udgith and *Venkata*, comm in VVRI part. VI p.3395-97.

18 - (1) 1. *Sāy* - comm.10.86-8-9. हविषि समानमिदं सर्वं तशस्विजः आ वृणते प्रार्थयन्ते .

2. Griffith R.Hymns the Rigveda Vol.II p.521.

- 18 - (ii) In 10.164.2 *vr̥nate* implies the sense of praying, or invoking. The said *rc* is rendered as 'pray' by (*sāy*)<sup>1</sup>, 'elect' (Griffith)<sup>2</sup>; 'wahl' (Geldner)<sup>3</sup>; Skanda and Mudgala do not comment. Veṅkata keeps the word as it is<sup>4</sup>.
- (iii) In 6.17.8, *vr̥nate* occurs, in the sense of 'invocation'; it is rendered as 'invoking' by (*sāy*)<sup>1</sup>; "chose" (Griffith)<sup>2</sup>; "erwahlen" (Geldner)<sup>3</sup>.
- (iv) In the *rc* 10.13.4 the verbal form *avr̥nīta* implies "praying". It is rendered as 'pray' by (*sāy*)<sup>1</sup>, 'chose' (Griffith)<sup>2</sup>; Zog (Geldner)<sup>3</sup>; Udgiṭha<sup>4</sup> agrees with *sāy*.

- 18 - (ii) 1. *Sāy* comm. भृदं वे शेषजनेषु वरं वरजिषि दुःस्वन्ताविनाशो रूपं फलं वृजेत सैव  
जनाः प्राप्नुयन्ते ।
2. Griffith R.Hymns of Rigveda. Vol.II p.598.
3. Veṅkata -
4. Skanda, Mudgala and Veṅkata's comm. in VVRI part VII p.3865
3. Geldner K.F., Der Rigveda; Vol. III Hos.35.p.391.
- (iii) 1. *Sāy*. किंचास्मिन् काले स्वयन्ति स्वयन्ति संग्रामे इदं वृजेत संग्रजनेभ्यः ॥
2. Griffith R.Hymns of Rigveda Vol.I p.575.
3. Geldner K.F. Der Rigveda Vol.II Hos. Vol.34 p.114.
- (iv) 1. *Sāy*. अष्टजितं प्राययत् प्रमुञ्चते ।
2. Griffith R.Hymns of Rigveda Vol.II p.397.
3. Geldner K.F. Vol.III Hos.35 p.142.
4. Skanda, Mudgala, Udgiṭha and Veṅkata comm. in VVRI part VI p.3252.

elect, choose, (Velankar)<sup>5</sup>; "erwählen" (Geldner)<sup>6</sup>

- (v) 5.20.3 <sup>vāṇīrmahe</sup> ~~z~~ it is rendered as 'choose' (say)<sup>1</sup>; choose (Griffith)<sup>2</sup>; erwählen (Geldner)<sup>3</sup>. Veṅkata and Mudgala<sup>4</sup> agree with sāy.

- (vi) 10.33.4. Avṛni - it is rendered as 'select' by (sāy)<sup>1</sup>; 'chose' (Griffith)<sup>2</sup>; 'erwählt' (Geldner)<sup>3</sup>; "Pray" (Udgitha, Veṅkata)<sup>4</sup>; Skanda<sup>5</sup> do not comment.

- 19 - (i) The nominal form vara occurs as vāra and varā. In rc 1. 119.3. It is rendered as 'highest' (sāy)<sup>1</sup>; 'choice boon' (Griffith)<sup>2</sup> "Wunsch" (Geldner)<sup>3</sup>; 'sreṣṭha (skanda)<sup>4</sup>; 'highest'<sup>5</sup> (Mudgala and Veṅkata)<sup>5</sup>

- (ii) In 1.140.13, the verbal form *varanta* is rendered as  
'obtained' (*sāy*)<sup>1</sup> 'choose' (Griffith)<sup>2</sup>; 'Lohngabe' (Geldner)<sup>3</sup>

5. Velankar H.D. JUB Sept 1959 P.II.Hymns to Agni in  
Mandala X, p.7.

6. Geldner K.F. Der - Rigveda, Vol.II Hos.Vol.35 P.

- (v) 1. sāy., comm. *सायं देवतादेवात्मनाम्* ।  
 2. Griffiths-Hymns of Rigveda. Vol.I p.483.  
 3. Geldner, Karl F. Der - Rigveda; Vol.II Hos.Vol.34.P.20  
 4. Skanda, Mudgala, Udgītha, Veṅkata comm. in VVRI  
 part IV p.1697.

- (vi) 3 Geldner K.F. Der Rigveda Vol.III Hos.Vol.35.  
2 Griffith R. - Hymns Rigveda Vol.II p.182.

- 19 - (i) 1. Sāy - यत् येन रयेन अग्निं स्तोतारं भवति वरं देवेषु धनम् अग्नयेः प्रापयथः .  
2. Griffith R.Hymns of Rigveda Vol.I p.162.  
3. Geldner K.F. Der Rigveda Vol.I Hos. 33 p.428.  
4- 5. Skanda, Mudgala, Venkata comm in VVRI part II p.911.

- (ii) 1. Say - ईषं इष्यमाणं मन्त्रसोदिकं, वरं वरणीयं ऐच्छं अन्यदापि यथासक्तं वरेण प्रापयन्तु।  
2. Griffith R. Hymns of Rigveda Vol. I P. 195.  
3. Geldner K. F. Der Rigveda. Vol. I Hos. Vol. 33. p. 197.

"choose" (Vêlankar)<sup>4</sup>; choose (Oldenberg)<sup>5</sup>; "choose" (Veṅkata)<sup>6</sup>.

Thus it is clear that the  $\sqrt{vr}$  is interpreted as having the following nuances. It can be concluded that 'vara' has the sense of praying, choosing, asking for, etc. The word vara occurs in the RV with ādyudātta and antodātta i.e. Vara (choice, selection, a action noun) and Varā<sup>(agent nam)</sup><sup>20</sup>. The seer expects protection, friendship; rewards like heroic sons, wealth, cattles, horses which would be helpful to them. In the 10th Mandala only, ṛsi is seen to be praying for removing darkness from the heart. In the 1.12 it is mentioned that they wanted wealth and food which would produce heroic, vigorous sons.

In the environment of the verbal or nominal forms of  $\sqrt{vr}$  we do not have situations where somebody is made to be please by somebody for somebody. The ṛsi himself chooses generally something for himself. In RV we do not find a situation parallel the situation to Up<sup>{s}</sup> i.e. X chooses Y object but there is no A to tell X to choose in Saṁhitā.

(ii) 4. Velankar H.D. JUB. Sept. 1963. P.II  
Hymns to Agni in Mandala I p.17

5. Oldenberg, The Agni Hymns. SBE No. XLVI p. 145.

6. Skanda, Mudgala, Venkata comm. in VVRI part III p.1003.

20. Burrow T. The Sanskrit Language, Chap. IV, P. 124.

21. Modern Scholars like V.M. Apte also mentions two meanings of  $\sqrt{vr}$  - choose; protect or cover.

vide - JUB, Sept. 1950 Vol. XIX (new series) , part 2.

Apte V.M. p.15.

AV - In the AV 'vara' is connected with the sense of <sup>the</sup> highest fruit. The forms of  $\sqrt{\text{vr}}$  or vara occur rarely in AV.

The nominal form varān<sup>22</sup> in 16.6.10 is rendered as 'highest fruit by (sāy)<sup>1</sup>; highest fruit of deeds (sataṣvālekar)<sup>2</sup>.

In 20.77.6 the verbal form means desired object.

The nominal form varāya<sup>23</sup> in 7.3.1 is rendered as for the highest fruit (sāy)<sup>1</sup>; space (?) by (whitney)<sup>2</sup>.

The verbal form vrne<sup>24</sup> in 7.15.1 ; is rendered by sāy<sup>f</sup> as <sup>(sāy)<sup>1</sup></sup> {to beg}; 'to accept' by (sātavālekar)<sup>2</sup> .

22.- 1. Sāy. comm. on the AV. 16.6.10.

2. Sātavālekar D.V. on the Atharvaveda.

23 - 1. Sāy. Comm. on 7.3.1.

2. Whitney keeps the form by question mark Whitney W.D.

The Atharvaveda Saṁhitā. Eos. Vol.7 p.390 remarks in notes " This is a mechanical translation. "

24 - 1. Sāy. comm. 7.3.1.

2. Sātavālekar D.V. Atharvaveda Saṁhitā part III p.24.

YV - In YV the vr̥ means also to choose to obtain. The YV gives the following stories which enable us to get a picture of the concept 'vara' -

- I - Prajāpati created off springs, they being created went away from him and they went to Varuna. He pursued them and asked them to be returned but Varuna disagreed with Prajāpati and then he said, "choose a boon and give them to me". Prajāpati prays to Varuna by saying that in this creation that which is <sup>the</sup> highest (vara) take it and remaining part give back to him (Prajāpati). Varuna touched to the black beast with one white foot - saying - "this is mime". ( 2.1.24 )
- II - When Indra requested earth to share a third part of his guilt at the time of killing of Visvā vapu - domestic priest of gods; the earth put a condition "Let me choose a boon". By that boon she wished not to overcome through digging. ( 2.5.1.2 )
- III - In 2.5.2.54<sup>and</sup>7 dyāvā Prthivī wished to have to be adorned with Naksatrās with variegated things by Indra, in the battle of Vrtra.
- IV - When Agni departed from gods, gods requested to come back to them for carrying out the oblations. Herein Agni put a condition by choosing the boon in the form of offering Vājaprasaviya in the sacrifice. 5.4.9.1.

V - Similarly Aditi, the goddess, is seen to fulfil her desire that she wanted opening and concluding oblations in the sacrifice; when the gods were uncertain in fixing the quarters on the vedi. They requested Aditi to help in distinguishing quarters. (6.1.5.1.)

VI - Rudra also put a condition by choosing a boon - that he will be a overlord of animals. In the afore going stories the following points may be concluded. The expression of the words varam vṛṇisva; varam vṛṇai; expect either a share in sacrifice; superiority over the animals; a share of cup in rites etc. That means in YV the boon is offered on the lower level. Moreover it becomes a condition for other. A person gets something in exchange of otherthing. ( 6.2.3.2 )

In this narration the boon is indirect and conditional. The boon becomes a condition for giving the creation to Prājāpati for example 2.1.21.

In YV the boon has barter at its base, and not in the Ups. In YV there is a semantic development of √vr. Brahmā created, Varuṇa takes away Brahmā's creation. Brahmā tells Varuṇa - " choose a boon " that is offering of boon is clear (Y) ; but the boon is not specified.

Prajāpati (A) tells Varuṇa (x) - " Give them to me " .

Varuṇa's choice is not known. Prajāpati orders for the choice and Varuṇa has to return to Brahmā his creation. Thus one thing is missing in this story.

Brāhmanas -

In Brāhmanas, some more light is thrown on the problem of vara. The AB informs about different sacrificial rites; in which some short stories are referred in the context of the gods granting the boons to the other gods for example 1.2.1. <sup>25</sup>

The stories are as follows -

I The Aditi goddess asked for a boon, when the presiding deities over the sacrifice went away from gods because of some reason; those gods felt that they were unable to perform any rite in connection with the sacrifice. So the gods went to Aditi and asked for her favour by which they would come to know the Yajñakarma. Moreover they would be active enough to do those sacrificial acts. Aditi's boon refers to the sacrificial rite, viz- In the somayaga, rice would be offered to Aditi in the opening and concluding rites and as per her wish the eastern direction would be known after her. <sup>27</sup> 1.2.1

25. In Śukla Yv.  $\sqrt{vr}$  also means to accept i.e. 1.13, 4.8; overcome - 4.29; select. 27.3.

26. "Prānānām kṛptyai prānānām pratiprajñātyai --- athā etam varamavṛṇīta. " AB 1.2.1

27. TS 6.1.5 mentions the same story parallel to AB 1.2.1, regarding Aditi's boon.



II. Mitrāvaruṇa obtained a boon from the gods e.g. offering of Payasyā<sup>28</sup> in the morning pressing of the Soma sacrifice when gods asked them for removing faults in the morning pressing ceremony. 2.3.12

III. Another story is referred in which Rudra chooses a boon from gods when they came to know that Prajāpati is acting sinfully. It was a censurable act on the part of Prajāpati. Gods requested Rudra to shoot prajāpati with his arrow as Rudra is considered having giant and terrific form. He agreed to gods, requested if the vara that he would have command over animals is approved of hence his epithet Pasupati. 3.9

Thus according to the AB the boon is granted by laying down a condition to a granter. It is not mere a giving and a taking; but the giver of the boon asks some kind of work to be done by the receiver, and then the receiver agrees to the giver in exchange according to the wish. The boons in the AB are associated with the sacrificial acts and not to epistomology<sup>1</sup> as in Ups. The recipient of the boon does not ask for wealth,

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28. Payasyā - A mixture of boiled milk of a cow and little  
( a drop ) curd.

cattle, land etc. as the *Somhitās*. On the contrary they are in need of having a share in the sacrificial rites. They are satisfied with the offerings of the oblations. AB narrates a boon as a reward / payment. e.g. It is done in response to the service done.

### SB

SB 4.1.1.21; 3.1.4.18 and 19 ; 1.1.3.84 ; 6.1.19 uses the  $\sqrt{vr}$  in the sense of " to choose " = to illustrate.

SB - 3.2.5.4; 1.1.3849 . J.

Indra chose waters for their help while fighting with *Vrtra*.

In the TA verbal form *vr̥nase* occurs in the sense of praying for example 1- 6.4.2 the dead body is free to go where *pitrs* are prayed for; and it goes with *Pitrs* to the highest place also with the performance of *Iṣṭāpurta* karma.

2. The verbal form *vr̥nati* means pervading in 3.11.3.

3. In 2.2.1 *Prajāpati* offers a boon to who practises hard penance. Having been pleased with them he gave a boon that *Āditya* will be their leader. *Prajāpati* permitted to fight with *Āditya*. Herein the reason for granting a boon is mentioned i.e. performance of penance.

The *KS*<sup>29</sup> mentions directly that the boon is *Ātman*; *Ātman* is the highest element Thus the nominal and verbal forms of the  $\sqrt{vr}$  are commonly used in the vedic literature  $\sqrt{Vr}$  = to choose when *Agni* is chosen as a messenger. *RV* does not give parallel cases as those of *Ups*.

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29. *KS* 44.5

*Ātman* is a chosen one. " "by which he wins the *Ātman*. "

The AV and the Yv reflect those objects connected with the sacrificial rites; sacrificial objects. The Yv has short stories introduced in between the directions of a ritual. This reminds us about the comment with reference to Brāhmanas viz. "legends are like oasis in the desert."<sup>30</sup> There is no hierarchy between the granter and <sup>the</sup> recipient of the boon in the Yv. The Brāhmanas are the connecting link between the vedic and the upaniṣadic literature. They are helpful for the understanding of the later philosophical literature. The stories in the Brāhmanas give mostly, the directions for the performance of the sacrificial rites and ceremonies, and the sacrificial gifts. Although the stories concern with the creation, or the cosmogonic element, or the sociology or the other sciences like Geometry, astronomy, etc.; all of them have the sacrificial motive at their base. " Tremendous importance is ascribed to the sacrifice ".<sup>31</sup> It may be observed that the sacrifice is the ruling principle over all. It is the highest aim of the life. It is a power which governs the nature; Thus the sacrifice is ranked at a high grade at that period. All the stories have the sacrifice as their background around which all the discussions start; on which every-

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30. Winternitz M - HIL Vol. I p.209.

31. Vide Winternitz M. HIL Vol I p. 197.

thing depends. And this ritualism is changed into the philosophy later on in the Upaniṣadic time.

Now coming to the Ups. we are able to gather more information, and form some clear and concrete picture about the nature, contents and the participants of the boon. We find that the contents of a boon refer to metaphysical knowledge. The granter possesses knowledge with mastery in a particular branch of knowledge. The recipient does not have an extra-ordinary siddhi, but he is inquisitive to know about further movement of jīva when it passes away; and by which path does it proceed and the place where it reaches ! This means that boons are related to eschatology and metempsychosis. The granter or receiver of the boon never puts a condition reciprocally; when a boon is asked for, and granted. It becomes essential to fulfil the contents of the boon asked for on the part of the granter. The recipient never asked for material wealth but was eager to have progress in spiritual path. At the time of <sup>V</sup>Vara ( o-dāna ) the receiver of the boon selects the granter, he approaches to a granter and asks to fulfil his desired object. The experts were known to them and therefore they approach to them. The person who approaches, tries to please the person approached; by some or other way that may be a modest behaviour; or mature in a mind and intellect. The aspirants

are not isolent or attacking; they do not revolt while they try to please him with a pleasing manners. Thereafter the granter examines that person approached and observes him, if he is entitled to secure or not entitled to secure that secret knowledge. The granter gives to the point knowledge, and does not speak about more than wanted.

In the epic Rāmāyana the boons and curses go together. The boon to one becomes curse to the other viz. when the king Dasaratha offered a boon to the queen Kaikeyi i. e. " the consecration of her son as the heir for the kingdom, " becomes a curse on the part of Rāma and Rāma's mother.

The boons and the curses function significantly in the life of the Rāma, the son of the king Dasaratha. The number of crises in the life of Rāma like the Rāma's exile in the forest for the 14 years; the abduction of the Sītā; etc. are

due to the boons and curses.<sup>32</sup> The king Dasaratha's promise to the Kaikeyi is a curse indidguise of a boon. The boons in the Rāmāyana lead to the development of the plot. The story does not lead to the exposition of the philosophy as compared to those stories of the Ups.

Sometimes the boon becomes remedy over a curse<sup>33</sup> viz. in the legend of the Garuda, the wife of the Kasyapa was cursed by her son viz Aruna, because of her hasty nature. He gave a curse that she would have been a slave to her co-wife (Kadrū) for five hundred years further. It is told that she would be made free from the slavery by her (Vinatā) second son. Thus Aruna's speech is a curse which would be turned into a boon.

Some stories in the MbH.<sup>34</sup> does not proceed further. They remain static in a way, viz. Indra and Agni granted a boon to the Sibi when they were pleased with the king. The gods bestowed upon him the everlasting fame. The story does not develop the plot or it does not expound the philosophical doctrine, as the stories compared to those in the Rāmāyana and the Ups. respectively.

32. For the information about the boons and curses in the Rāmāyana, vide - the article by Deshpande N.A. - Professor Birincikumar Barua commemoration Vol. p.212.

33. MbH; Ādi parva:n 1.16; quoted by Dange S.A. Legends in the Mahabharata. p. 1-2.

34. MbH Vana Parvan . 3.131; 194 Anusāsan Parvan - 13.58

In the Vana Parvan<sup>35</sup> of the MbH, the story of the Sāvitrī, the daughter of the king Asvapati, is narrated. Sāvitrī obtained five boons when Yama, was pleased with her. The story is narrated as follow. Sāvitrī knew the time of death of her husband i.e. Satyavana; from the Nārada before her marriage with the Satyavana. She observed the vow of "Trirātra" and she followed her husband intentionally when Satyavāna started to go to the forest. In the evening Satyavāna did not feel well and so he went to sleep. At that time Yama, the god of death came to take out the life of Satyavāna. Sāvitrī followed Yama when he carried out the life of Satyavāna. Yama requested her to go back again and again but with her wise and intellectual talk, she hold conversation with Yama and pleased him. Yama asked to choose a boon except the life of her husband. Sāvitrī obtained the boons viz. 1. Restoration of the eye-sight of her father-in-law 2. Achievement of the kingdom for her father-in-law 3. Hundred sons to her father viz. Asvapati 4. Hundred sons in the race of Satyavāna having united with her husband 5. The life of Satyavāna.

It may be observed from the above mentioned story that the story lays down the vow for the achievement of the desired object. The physical form of the granter is also described where as in the Ups the bodily description, of the granter is not found. In the Sāvitrī upākhyāna, Yama's dreadful form is described as having a large body of a darkish colour; red eyes, a nose in the hand. He is compared with the Sun in effulgency. Yama appeared like a <sup>one</sup> clad in red attire

with the head decked with a diadem.

The story mentions the reason of pleasing by a granter to the grantee viz. the pious and ascetic merits and her wise and reasonable talk.

In this story the grantee is not free to ask for the desired object but the granter put the condition to the grantee. Thus the boon becomes conditional though it differs from those of the Brāhmanas. In the Brāhmanas when the boon is offered; some kind of work is expected to be done for the other. While in this story of the MbH, Yama did not expect any kind of work or object in the exchange from the grantee. Yama showed his readiness to fulfil Sāvitri's desired object, except the life of her husband. At the beginning Sāvitri asked for the boons which were chosen for the good of the others and not for herself - she asked for the material happiness. Thus the boons chosen by Sāvitri fall in the group of mānuṣa-vitta. They do not lead to the spiritual happiness. Yama granted her with more than wanted He(gave)granted the great fame and success in the world, to the Satyavāna . He also gave four hundred years life to the Satyavāna with his sons and the grand sons, while in the Upaniṣadic stories the granter of the boon grants the object which is asked for. Thus this type of development is seen in the Epic and it is developed in the Purānās.

II. Arjuna acquired the weapon from Śiva when Śiva was pleased with the Arjuna due to his severe penance.<sup>36</sup> In this story

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36. MbH. Vana Parvan, 38-44 ( वनपर्व . )



the command of Yudhishtira made Arjuna to go to the Kāmyakavana for obtaining the sight of Śiva. The story refers to the performance of the hard penance as the necessary cause for getting the desired object. The Arjuna performed hard penance viz. He used to eat the leaves fallen upon the ground from the trees and some fruits, after the interval of the six nights and then at the interval of the fortnight. After the month he stopped eating of the leaves and the fruits. The Arjuna performed the austerities with the arms upraised leaning upon nothing and stood on the tips of his toes. The story refers to the type of austerities for the achievement of the boon. Then after the effect of the Arjuna's penance is mentioned viz. the earth smoked all around due to his asceticism.

The Śiva appeared in the form of a Kirāta and fought with the Arjuna severally. A fierce combat between the Arjuna and the Kirāta is described in the story. Śiva leaved the Kirāta's form and revealed himself. The Śiva praised Arjuna and granted him an irresistible weapon and also the immortal eyes to see the form of the Śiva. The Śiva told the reason of pleasing viz. the Arjuna was unequal in the courage and the patience. Strength and the prowess among the Kṣatriyas. Thus the reason of pleasing with the grantee is told by the granter.

The Arjuna praised the Śiva viz. the granter, with bending down on his knee and bowed with his head. Thus the posture of the grantee is pointed out when the grantee worshipped the granter. The physical form of the granter is also described. viz the Śiva, having blue throat matted lock. The Śiva is addressed as the chief of the gods, the refuge of all the gods. The ruling principle etc. The Arjuna asked for the Śiva's protection and asked to forgive him because he had not recognised the Śiva when he fought with the Kirāta . The Śiva informed about the past life of the Arjuna. This is a peculiar development in the boon's nature found in the MbH. In the Saṁhitās, the Brāhmanas or in the Ups. Such type of description is not found.

The Arjuna wished to have such a weapon from the lord Śiva which would be destroyed at the end of Yuga, the entire universe. By that terrible weapon Arjuna would obtained the victory in the terrible conflict between the Pāṇḍavās and the Kauravas. The weapon which when hurled with the mantras should produce the thousands of darts; and the fiercelooking maces and arrows like the snakes of verulent poison. The lord Śiva offered him his favourite weapon viz. the 'Paśupata' with the knowledge of hurling and withdrawing it. The god Śiva put a condition to Arjuna about the use of the Weapon viz - The weapon should not be hurled without adequate cause if it hurled at any enemy of little might it may destroy the whole universe.

Further Purāṇas also refer to a number of boons.  
The VP. has the vocable vara in sense of choosing,  
selecting.

- I. The VP ( 300-500 A.D. )<sup>37</sup> mentions a boon by  
Parāśara to Pulastya that he would be a narrator of  
the Purāṇas. Apparently the boon does not seem  
to be dealing with very deep concept of philosophy.  
The philosophy which it discusses from the dialogue  
between Maitreya and Parāśara is some what similar  
to that of vedas and that of Ups.

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37. vide Kane P.V. ; HDS. Vol. V. P.II, p. 909.

viz. Cosmology, physics etc. Here the highest entity is Viṣṇu and not the Brahman. Viṣṇu is connected with the ruling of the universe. He is all pervading, eternal, imperishable and also the root cause of creation. The VP answers to the questions with reference to the cosmos. ( VP I.1. )

II. Dhruva, the son of Uttānapāda attains immutable position through the worship of Viṣṇu. The legend is narrated as follow: He was insulted by his step mother viz Suruchi so he cherished the desire to obtain such place that it shall be honoured universally. Dhruva, a small child wished to get such a station as none before him has attained. Dhruva's desired object was not related to the worldly objects like dominion, all kinds of riches and royal pleasures being a king's child; but it was beyond the reach of man and which was difficult to be obtained. Dhruva performed a hard penance immensed his mind in deep contemplation and so Viṣṇu was pleased with him. ( VP 99 adhyāya ff. )

He asked him a desired object Viṣṇu tells him the reason of pleasing to him.

Unlike Ups the VP presents a full bodily description of a granter i.e. Viṣṇu - bearing a Conch, a discuss, a mace and a bow in his hand Dhruva praises Viṣṇu, on the contrary Upaniṣadic recipient does not praise. Viṣṇu bestows the station, above the three worlds at the end. These are Purāṇic developments.

- III. The story of Mārīśā is related to Maṭṭeya by Parāsara in which she prays to Viṣṇu to grant husbands in succeeding births and also a son equal to a Patriarch amongst men. Moreover she also wished to be possessed of affluence and beauty. (1.15 614)
- IV. Diti's son Hiranyakāsipu obtained power over all the three worlds. (1.20.21)
- V. Prahlāda, the son of Hiranyakāsipu had an unflinching faith in Viṣṇu and he devoted himself constantly to him in succeeding births. Further Prahlāda requested the god to forgive his father for various sins. Viṣṇu granted his request. The story mentions one more boon though it was not asked for viz. Prahlāda will obtain freedom from existence due Viṣṇu's grace. (VP.1.17).
- VI. Sagar<sup>a</sup> gets a boon that his grandson would bring down the Ganges on the earth. (VP 4.4.12)
- VII. Pururavas asked the Gandharvas for the lifelong company of Urvasī (18 FF)
- I. In the MP (260 A.D. to 400 A.D.)<sup>38</sup> Diti, the mother of demons practised penance and obtained the Cāndrāyana vrata to please the ṛsis. She asked for a vrata that would free her from the crushing grief of her son's destruction and make her happy in this world as well as in the other world. The sage Vasīṣṭha advised her to

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38. vide Kane P.V. HDS Vol.V.PII.P 900.

observe the Madanadvādasī vrata by observing which Diti became the mother of Maruts and was liberated from the pangs of grief. The sage describes Madana-dvādasī vrata. ( MP 7.7 )

- II. Pīvarī , the daughter of Barhiṣad Pitṛs practised severe penance for a long time. Viṣṇu was pleased with her devotion and appeared before her. She prayed for a beautiful husband; Yogic powers, and would be able to curb her passions. The Lord granted more than expected. viz. blessed her with a daughter who was to be well versed in Yoga to be the mother of Kṛṣṇa, Gaura and Sambha who will be great mahatmans and also attain herself mokṣa after having given birth to such illustrious sons. ( MP 15.7.4 )

Actually the attainment of mokṣa was not asked for but Viṣṇu " Pours " more than receiver's wish. Pīvarī asked for a manly husband that is a kind of mānusa-vitta, while mokṣa can be placed on a higher level than material rewards. Further the MP mentions the future of next generations who would have remarkable acquired merits.

- III. Anagha- the son of Vibhrāja also seeked to have powerful, illustrious dutiful son who would be well-versed in all Śāstras and Yoga; well conversant with the languages of all the creatures. This boon comes under the mānusa vitta . ( MP 21 ff.)

IV. In the Śūkrācāryākhyāna, the method of tapas is stated.

Śukra, observed that method, viz. a vow of smoke i.e. the penance with suspended down head; imbibing the smoke of chaft for a thousand years. Śukra praises Viṣṇu similar to that of Dhruva praised in the VP ( MP 47 ff )

V. In the legend of Prahlāda, Prahlāda succeeded in obtaining the boon from Śukra, after Śukra had cursed them that asuras

would lose their intellect and would be defeated by the Devas. At that time Prahlāda stood before him in repentance along with Asuras with their heads cast down in shame. Śukra moved with pity and compassion, so granted a boon to remove the effect of his curse. Boon

becomes remedy over a curse in this story. (MP 47 ff. )

Śukra told that Asuras would obtain wealth in future.

The curse would be effective. It can not be changed because fate is stronger. That means the effect of a curse was certain but not permanent. In the story of a boon. The element of fate is brought in. That means a boon is related to fate. It is more powerful than boon according to the MFP. Herein daiva philosophy is operating.

39  
Fate is everything in man's life.

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39 Bhavabhūti also supports the thought in Mālatī-Mādhava.:-

सर्वेषां भगवती भवितव्यतेव.

VI. Brahmā granted boons to Daityas viz. Maya and Tārakāsura.

Maya wanted to build a fort which would be free from the attacks of enemies, and impregnable and if not possible it was to be vulnerable by one arrow only shot once by Śiva in the course of the battle. Tārakāsura demon wanted to overcome death and consequently he practised penance to please him who remarked to him that no living being could escape from the rewards of Karma, and therefore in his haughtiness he asked for his death at the hands of a babe of seven days old. ( MP 129 ff ).

This story has a reference to the philosophy of Karma and it does not refer to the problem of mokṣa and the Varapṛāpti gives temporary exemption from the rewards of the action.

VII. The demon Hiranyakasipu practised hard penance for 11000 years. He took his bath regularly and then plunged himself in neck-deep water and observed the vow of silence. He also restrained and controlled his passions. The MP stresses that there is no greater ascetic than one who strictly follows celibacy by subjugating all his passions.  
( MP - 161 ff )

The reason of performing tapas is stated when in the Harikesākhya  
the father orders Hari Kesa to go and practise penance in Kāśī.

I. The BHP (5th century A.D. to the 10th century)<sup>40</sup> mentions

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40. BHP. vide . Kane P.V. HDS VolV p.II p.898.



the specific form of a granter of the boon viz. Viṣṇu . Similarly the BHP emphasised on the prescribed modes of worship and deep meditation as necessary for tapas in the story of Kardama. Viṣṇu is pleased with him and appeared before him in the form of Brahmā, having lotus feet seated on Garuda bright as the Sun with a garland of white lotus and blue water lily; adorned with a crown and ear-pendants, a conchshell in his hand, the mace, Śrivatsa mark on his breast, Kaustubha jewel hung on his neck; Kardama fell at the feet of the Lord when He appeared before him and praised him. Kardama wanted to marry with a girl of similar disposition who would bring all the best that one wishes as a householder. Viṣṇu bestowed on his desired object and also said " you will attain Me; you with your controlled senses will see yourself and the world as identical with me and Me with yourself. " The speech of Viṣṇu is advaitic. ( BHP 21 adhyaya ft ).

- II. Viṣṇu blessed Prthu. He told the king that the attainment of his favour was not easy. It is not easily obtained by the practice of penance, or by Yoga, or by Sacrificial acts. The Lord abides in the 'hearts of those who have equipoised state. It also stressed that if a man worships the Lord constantly, faithfully disinterestedly by performing his duties prescribed by scriptures, The devotee's mind becomes pure gradually. When the mind

becomes pure, the sense-pleasures do not attract a man and then only a man finds peace, oneness with Brahmā. The mental and physical state of Prthu is noticable in this story i.e. when the Lord is pleased, the king stood with folded hands, before Him. He could not look at Him because of His lustre,<sup>the</sup> King's eyes were full of tears, the throat was choked up by tears and he was unable to speak. He asked for ten thousands ears. The Lord's voice was a supra thing in relation to yogic powers, wealth, sons and even liberation. Through it he liked to keep Lord's memory like<sup>✓</sup> in his heart. ( BHP . 4.20 )

III. The story of Prācetas also shows the Lord appears in a form compact of pure sattva dispelling their weariness. His radiant lustre looked like a cloud on a peak of Meru.

The intention of the father's order is that prācetas should carry out penance by plunging into the waters of ocean and by propitiating Hari, by japa. They also regard the attachment with the Lord is the best thing. The Lord bestowed on them every kind of wealth. ( BHP 4.30 ft )

IV. Hiranyakashipu wanted to make himself invincible, immortal remain young, become the sole unrivaled ruler of the earth. He therefore went to the mandārā mountain to practise an extra-ordinary penance. The story describes another way of tapas viz. standing on toes with the arms stretched upwards, eyes fixed on the sky. The effect of tapas on devotee's body

is that a fire mixed with smoke broke out of his head, spread over all sides and it heated the worlds above, below and all around the earth. Gods requested Brahmā to put an end of this severe tapas; so Brahmā, the giver of boon came there and asked him his desire. Then Brahmā sprinkled holy water from his gourd<sup>41</sup> on the Daitya's body. This water was drunk up by the ants and other insects. Then Hiranya - kasipu came out of that hill of earth and grass; looked like gold, strong and brave. Brahmā transmutes his form. This is an example of getting immortal form when the granter of the boon is pleased. In the Upaniṣadic boon-based stories the receiver's form is not transmuted.

( BHP 7.3-5 )

- V. Once Bali worshipped the Lord by the performance of the horse-sacrifice. When the Lord was pleased, entered the sacrificial place in the form of Vāmana. Bali offered a promise to fulfil his desire. The Brahmin asked for a little piece of land, just three places in length, measured by his feet. Bali gave him the land according to his promise; by pouring water into his hand. (BHP 8.20 )
- The period for tapas also increases. Purāṇa give thousand years period for a penance. This is in accordance with its usual style. The story of Hiranya kasipu mentions 1 lakhs years of practising of penance.

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41. BHP 7.3.9 " चमूः जलेनैव तद्वत्तन्मा माधुर्ययम् "

VAP ( between 350 - 550 A.D.)<sup>42</sup> denotes the vocable 'vara' in two meanings 1. highest, or best; Superior. 2. Boon. In 33.14 and 52.98 the vocable 'vara' means highest i.e. Dhruva is highest than Agni, Kāśyapa. In 55.60, VAP emphasises constant faith on god, as superior to all. The Yogins are asked to have faith on Śiva, when Śiva was pleased.

In 32.53 in the course of the narration there is a reference to 'vara' viz. boon it states that the kings of Yayāti generation obtained long-life, wealth fame and prosperity in the form of eight siddhis.

The narrative describes Śiva's form as that in the BHP i.e. Śiva putting on flowers and sandal paste on the body, holding the bow in his hand namely Pināka; riding on the bull, staff and trident (trisūla) in his hand; fierce etc.

Śiva obtained a boon from Brahmā that Pitṛs have a share in Śrāddha-ritual. Men may worship Pitṛs with sandal paste, flowers, rice-balls, first to pitṛs and then to the gods<sup>45/6</sup>

Śagara obtained rewards from Kapilamuni e.g. the reward of performance of hundred asvamedha sacrifices; the constant dwelling in the heaven and a vigorous son called Samudra. ( 26.148 ) .

VAP 30.42 describes rewards like long-life, gold, son thousand hands etc.

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42. VAP. 5.16 vide Kane P.V. HDS Vol.V.PII p.900.

VAP narrates the rewards obtained which may be called as material objects ( Preyas ) and not 'sreyas. There is no communication of two participants as in Ups. or other Purāṇas like VP, BHP, MP etc. some of the narrations refer to the usual practices and common beliefs among men.

The BRP ( between 4th and 6th century AD. )<sup>43</sup> also narrates the boons obtained by various persons: when it is used adjectively, 'vara' ( of Varau ) means highest and it does not refer to any highest principle or Lord; but it refers to ṛṣi<sup>44</sup> ( BRP 1.11.2 )

- II. Śiva grants the grantee that the latter world have constant devotion/ faith steadfast in him by the varadāna. ( BRP 1.2. 26-29 ).
- III. Indra grants a boon to the ṛṣi that he would obtain incomparable vigiourous disciples well versed in all saṃhitās. (BRP 1.2.35.32)
- IV. The daughter of Puloma got a boon that she would obtain a son who would be divine and supreme among brahmavits (BRP 23.55.40)
- V. Aṃsumān, the son of Sagar asked " if you grant me a boon, all my pitṛs will get immutable Brahman, and eternal place and your anger would be pacified. On account of your favour they will secure heaven ( BRP 3.4.12.3-7 )

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43. vide Kane P.V. HDS Vol.V P.II p.896.

44. BRP 1.11.2. 'चोदोऽयं दृष्टिं गते च उमादिभिर्भार्ये वरे' "

The examples of boons in the BRP consider heaven as covetable place possibly according to them there is no higher place than heaven.

- VI. The same thought occurs in the boon granted by Śiva to Trisāṅku: that he would get heaven with his bodily form.
- VII. Śiva offers a boon to the child of Gauri and gives missiles and weapons. ( BRP. 3.4.12.3-7).
- VIII. The goddess Lalita declared that whosoever worshipped her with devotion would always get Śrī, Yasas, and dharma and they would be free from any danger and that they would be happy and that they would obtain vidyā, vinaya and long-life. ( BRP 3.4.13.30).

The BRP mentions the granting of the boons either to the gods or to munis or to risis. In it the boons are not granted through dialogues while the BRP relates the stories in brief or it narrates the boon. The requisites like sincere faith, devotion play an important role in the attainment of a desired fruit, and not mānasa-vitta.

From the afore going Purāṇic boon-based stories, the concept of vara regarding its contents, nature and style emerges as follows:-

The VP discusses the problems of the creation, dissolution etc. wherein it accepts Viṣṇu as underlying principle of the universe and it gives the Sāṅkhyan cosmogonical account wherein the Puruṣa is created from Viṣṇu and then other

elements like Pradhāna, Prakṛti, Kāla etc are evolved.

In the VP<sup>it</sup> is told the Dhruvā khyā na<sup>wherein</sup>,<sup>1</sup> Dhruva's choice is related to daiva-vitta<sup>and not mānuṣa-vitta</sup> e.g. a station, none before him has attained. Daiva vitta implies knowledge with reference to Ups. The term daiva-vitta can be extended to purāṇas. It may be included the heaven which is regarded supreme place. The VP emphasises on contemplation and penance for the fulfilment of the desired object while in Ups penance is not an essential requirement in all cases.

The granter of a boon in the Purāṇas tells the reason of being pleased. e.g. indifference towards worldly objects and constant thinking of Him alone by Dhruva; whereas in Ups while a boon is being offered, the reason of being pleased, are not expressed directly. Some currents of hints thereto or indirect suggestions on are found in the Samhitās, Brāhmanas and Ups. The Purāṇas develop the ideas further which are latent in Ups.

The Purāṇas present a full bodily description of a granter e.g. In the VP, Viṣṇu is described as having a Conch, a discus a mace, a bow in his hand. The BHP elaborates the specific form of a granter of the boon. The grantee praises the granter of the boon. Almost all the stories mention more objects which are not asked for or wished by a grantee. Sometimes mokṣa is not asked for but the god frees the

devotee from his Karmic bondage through his grace. The boon does not give mokṣa as its reward; it gives temporary exemption from the rewards of action. The tapas certainly bears a reward, but that the reward has some limit. Sometimes the Purāṇas do not mention imperishable rewards like mukti as Ups do. Sometimes this has an advaitic tone. The VP refers to both the kinds of boons viz. Śreyas and Preyas. They add new ideas which are not found in the early vedic literature. The Purāṇas refer to devotion, contemplation, sincere faith as means to boons as Ups do. ~~BH~~ BHP stresses the prescribed modes of worship, as well as meditation as requisite for tapas. Sometimes the method of penance is described and the reasons for tapas are also given e.g. The penance with a head suspended down and imbing the smoke of chaff for a thousand years. Continuously restraining and controlling passions. The MP directly expresses that there is no greater ascetic than one who strictly follows celibacy by subjugating all his passions.

The Purāṇic boons are offered on the basis of supernatural powers. They do not deal with the metaphysical knowledge only, but the concept of boon changes here. It is connected with extra-ordinary divine favour. A person is sure to obtain any difficult object, with the god's grace.

Sometimes Purāṇas lay down rituals and vows for the accomplishment of one's desire. Sometimes the benevolent effect of the vara takes on the succeeding generations with the total



satisfaction of the recipient of the vara. One more development about the nature of boon can be pointed out viz. a boon becomes a remedy for a curse after its expiry. In this connection, sometimes, there is a role of daiva ( fate ) in the operation of the boon.

Sometimes a boon is obtained for the sake of others rather than for one's own's self. Sometimes the area of operation of a boon expands e.g. in the case of Sāvitrī.

It also refers to the Upaniṣadic thought that the attainment of a god's grace is not easy. The god can not be obtained by the practice of penance; yoga, or by sacrificial acts. The God 'reveals' himself to the devotee. <sup>46</sup> Sometimes in such description there is a philosophical description also. The Lord's grace comes to be known as supreme one. The devotee asks for the voice of a Lord by which he would like to keep Lord's memory fresh in the heart. All other things like Yogic powers, wealth, sons, even liberation from life are unimportant, or unconsiderable to a devotee. It is neither Karma, nor knowledge, nor devotion alone; but <sup>the</sup> Lord's grace is enough powerful to make a many happy devotee of all wories.

Moreover the physical state of a grantee is noticeable in some stories while Upaniṣads do not refer to it. Another important point may be referred to in connection with the concept of the boon, viz. the grantee's form may change or assume a new form.

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46. Compare to KATU .. नान्य-आत्मा प्रवर्तते तस्य: - - यमेवेयं गुणं तेन तस्य

The descriptions of gods enable us to help in iconic worship which is still to be continued.

In BRP the boons are granted either to a god or to a muni or to a rsi. It seems that both the participants are of equal grade e.g. gods. When a boon is being offered, one god approaches another god. The approaching god wants some help or reward from the approached god. Thus the approached god is higher than the approaching god. Thus the hierarchy is created for the time being and the phenomenon of hierarchy between the two interlocutors remains same throughout.