

CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

This Śākta Mahābhāgavata-Purāṇa contains the abridged accounts of the sports of Śiva, śakti and the incarnations of Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, the Pāṇḍavas, etc. which are described in details in the purāṇas e.g. Śiva-Purāṇa, Śrīmad-Bhāgavata-Purāṇa, Skandapurāṇa, Liṅgapurāṇa, Vāyupurāṇa, Devībhāgavatapurāṇa, Kālikā-purāṇa, Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, Mahābhārata etc. In this manner this Śākta Mahābhāgavate appears to be a great Sāra-Saṅgraha of different works preaching various sects and connects them together, emphasising the splendour of the goddess. Thus the splendour of the goddess served as a thread running throughout the pearls in the form of the anecdotes supporting other sects.

The Mahābhāgavatapurāṇa (Mahbg. Pu. Mahbg.) advocates Śaktism with a Śaiva tendency. It conceives Kālī as Parabrahman as well as the wife of Śiva or Śakti of Śiva. It narrates many interesting and peculiar stories such as those of Kālī's exploits as Satī, Pārvatī, Gaṅgā and Kṛṣṇā and describes Her appearance as the ten Mahāvidyās, Her worship by Rāma for killing Rāvaṇa and so on.

There has been no time in Indian History when the importance of Śakti, generally conceived as mother, has not been realized. The mother is one of the factors which plays an important role in one's life. It seems that man's sense of gratitude and veneration must have expressed itself in the form of this Mahābhāgavatapurāṇa in praise and devotion of Śakti.¹

It is the idea of unswerving devotion of the absolute (Ekāntika-Bhakti) on which the Purāṇas have based their religious philosophy. Owing to this very idea, Brāhmā, Viṣṇu, Śakti and other deities have been praised individually as the highest ones in some Purāṇa or other.²

1 Vide Kumar Dr. Pushpendra (ed.), The Mahābhāgavatapurāṇa, Eastern Book Linkers, Delhi-7, 1983, Preface P.5. This edition of the Mahābhāgavatapurāṇa is utilized throughout this study.

2 Vide Kumar Dr. Pushpendra (ed.), The Mahābhāgavatapurāṇa, introduction, P.22.

There is a distinct class of Upa-purāṇas known as Śākta-purāṇas and they deal exclusively with the female deity. The Śākta Upa-purāṇas, which have come down to us are Devī-purāṇa, Kālikā-purāṇa, Mahābhāgavata-purāṇa, Devī-Bhāgavata-purāṇa, and Cāṇḍī-purāṇa. Devī or Śakti is the central deity in these texts though worshipped under different names. Before the writing of these Purāṇas, we find many chapters in the Mahāpurāṇas on the praise and worship of the various forms of Devī.³

Accounts in the Mahābhārata, Harivamśa and the Major Purāṇas show that in early times the female deities of different forms and names were worshipped in different parts of India by both the Vedic Aryans and the non-Aryan tribes. In this way the Śakti cult was a great synthesizer of the Vedic and the non-Vedic, the Aryan and the non-Aryan religious approaches.⁴

These Śākta-purāṇas as available to us were written in the eastern part of the peninsula, which was considered a hot place of Śaktism during the period between the 6th and the 11th Century A.D. Authors

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

of those Purāṇas have tried their best to reconcile between the Āgamas and the Vedas. Still they did not escape from the contemporary trend of Tantrism in the country. They are very broad-minded persons, and besides Śakti-worship they praise the worship of Viṣṇu, Śiva, Brahmā and Gaṇeśa etc. They have advocated a kind of unity among these gods.⁵

The Mahābhāgavatapurāṇa is an interesting Upapurāṇa dealing with the praise of Devī and Her worship. Although it is a comparatively late work and is not mentioned in any of the Purāṇas and Upapurāṇas except the Brhaddharmapurāṇa it deserves to be studied for information about the contemporary state of Hindu religion and society in Bengal, especially in its eastern part which is adjacent to Kāmerūpa.⁶

The Mābhag. Pu. introduces several stories for establishing Śiva's superiority over other gods, especially over Viṣṇu. According to the Mābhag. Pu., a man whether he is a Śākta, Vaiṣṇava or a Śaiva, should worship Śaṅkara first of all and then his own tutelary deity with a feeling of reverence. But in

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid., P.24.

spite of its out-spoken inclination towards Śiva¹, the Mābhg. Pu. follows the Vedānta in advocating the unity of all gods.⁷

On the strength of the following evidences it is decided that the Mābhg. Pu. was written in Bengal and most probably in its eastern part adjacent to Kāmarūpa.

- (1) The Mābhg. Pu. devotes a few chapters to the praise of Kāmarūpa which is called the best of the 'fifty-one' mahāpīṭhas created by the fall of Setī's limbs-chapters 11-12; 76-78.⁸
- (2) According to Mābhg. Pu., Gaṅgā when following Bhagīratha, intended to visit Kāmākhyā but gave up Her project as she chanced to displease the sage Jāhnu at the very beginning of Her advance eastwards. This shows that the author of the Mābhg. Pu. has a special attraction for Kāmarūpa and wanted to add to it the same sanctity as is generally attached to those parts of the country which are watered by the Gaṅges.⁹

7 Ibid., PP. 25-26.

8 Ibid., P. 26.

9 Ibid.

- (3) The accounts of the Bhāgīrathī and the Padmā, as given in chapters 69-70, show that the author of the Mābhg.Pu. was quite familiar with these rivers and regarded both of them as sacred.¹⁰
- (4) In the Mābhg.Pu. the autumnal worship of Durgā has been connected with the story of Dāśarathī Rāma. The method of Durgā-worship, as described in this work, includes the following operations:- Bodhane of Devī in Bilva tree; special worship of Devī for three days (viz. Saptamī, Aṣṭamī and Navamī Tīthis in an earthen image after performing Devī's adhivāsa in the evening of the Śuklaśeṣṭhī Tithi; performance of patrikā-praveśa on the Saptamī Tithi and of śatrubali on the Navamī Tithi; and the immersion of image on the Daśamī Tithi with great merriment (sumahotseva). It is to be noted that the custom of śatrubali, an offering in which an image of the enemy is constructed with powdered rice and sacrificed before Devī on the Navamī Tithi is still surviving in Bengal.¹¹

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

- (5) Almost all of the numerous MSS. of the Mahābhāgavata, hitherto discovered, were found in Bengal, mostly in its eastern part, and are written in Bengali script.¹²
- (6) So far we have been able to find, it is only the authors of Bengal who refer to or draw upon the Mahābhāgavata.¹³
- (7) Independent MSS. of the Navagrahakavaca, Bhagavetīgītā, Śivasahasranāmastotra, Kāmākhyākavaca etc. claiming to be parts of the Mahābhāgavata, are found scattered all over Bengal. Some of these MSS. have been collected by the Dacca University and the Asiatic Society of Bengal.¹⁴

The Importance of the Mahābhāgavatapurāṇa :-

As already mentioned before, the Brhaddharma-purāṇa has included the name of the Mahābhāgavata in its list of eighteen Mahāpurāṇas. As a matter of fact, a comparison between the two Upapurāṇas shows that the author of the Brhaddharmapurāṇa thoroughly utilized the language and contents of the Mahābhāgavata in his work.

12 Ibid. P.27.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

Hence the Mahābhāgavata must have preceded the Brhaddharmapurāṇa, by a fairly long time, otherwise it could not have been regarded as an authoritative Mahāpurāṇa by the author of the latter. Brhaddharmapurāṇa was composed not later than the middle of the fourteenth century A.D. Hence the Mahābhāgavata cannot be dated later than the twelfth century A.D. Its ⁹Śaiva tendency like that of the earlier Kālikāpurāṇa and its silence about the present Kālikāpurāṇa which is remarkably inclined towards Vaiṣṇavism, tend to show that it was written about the tenth or eleventh century A.D.¹⁵

A study of the Mābhg. shows that its author lived in a society in which the most powerful sects were those of the ³Śaivas, ²Śāktas, and Vaiṣṇaves and which was seriously influenced by Tantrism. People performed ṣaṭ karma (the six acts, viz. vaśīkaraṇa, māraṇa, Uccāṭaṇa kṣobha, mohana, drāvana etc.), studied the Āgamas, and followed Tantric manners, customs and methods of worship. Even in their conception of the forms of deities they were often guided by the Tantras. So the author of the Mābhg. praised varṇāśrama-dharma and proscribed the study of Vedānta. He did not decry

15 Ibid. P.28.

Tantrism but tried to bring about a compromise between the two systems by making Devī say that the Āgama and the Veda were Her two hands with which she sustained the whole universe consisting of stationary and moving objects. (8.77).¹⁶

Sakti or Devī created the universe of Her own accord, subjected Herself to births and had Śiva as Her husband as stated in this Purāṇa. Herein she is referred to as Tēreke Brahman which in its form of Durgā stays at mountain Mandara.¹⁷ For further details see chapter VIII.

The Mabhg.Pu. is very important for the cult of Sakti as it tries to show the relation of saktism with all the important personalities of Indian History, events and the great books named as epics. Though in the other Purāṇas also we find that Rāma worshipped Durgā and then killed Rāvaṇa with Her help, but the readers will be astonished to study in the Mabhg., that Kṛṣṇa also was an incarnation of Devī. Śiva once requested Devī to be the husband and Himself to be the wife, and this desire as Purāṇakāra says, was fulfilled by the goddess in Kṛṣṇāvatāra.¹⁸

16 Ibid. P.29

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid. P.31

In this Purāṇa, the Rāma¹episode, the Kṛṣṇa episode, and the battle in Kurukṣetra of Pāṇḍaves against Kauravas and Bali-Vāmana and Indra-Vṛtra episodes all the main and important events of Paurāṇic mythology are related with the cult of Śakti. Thus the author tried to show harmony between Śaktism and other sects of Hinduism e.g. Vaiṣṇavism as well as Śaivism.¹⁹

Independent MSS. of the Bhagavatī-gītā, Śiva-sahasra-nāma-stotra, Nava-grahakavaca, Zāmākhyā-kavaca etc., claiming to be parts of the Mahbg. are found in all parts of Bengal. These evidences are perhaps sufficient to show that the Mahbg. became a highly popular work and was widely studied as an authoritative Purāṇa a few centuries ago.²⁰

Genesis of the Concept of Śakti :-

The Principle of rta :-

Philosophy has always played a leading role in the development of religious ideas in India. Philosophy right from the Vedas, has evolved through ratiocination (reasoning). The Vedic religion was dominated by the cult of sacrifices and thus it was a sacerdotal religion. The Vedic hymns are the prayers addressed by the seers to the deities viz. natural phenomena deified. The hymns indicate

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid. P.28.

a sort of intellectual activity going on^{on} the soil of the Sapta Sindhu for understanding the reality behind those phenomena. Though the hymns are mainly invocations to the gods, they represent the endeavour of the seers of the Vedas to comprehend the truth behind the regular recurrence of the natural phenomena.²¹ Thus it was an attempt to know the underlying principle i.e. "to see things as they will seem for ever in the light of eternity." In their search for the said principle the seers came across a mystic principle called ṛta.

The word ṛta conveys the meaning of a cosmic order or regulating principle. According to Dr.F.V.Kane²² the word ṛta has got three meanings in the R̥gveda :-

- (1) the regular and general order in the cosmos,
- (2) the correct and ordered way of the cult of the God,
- (3) moral conduct of the men.

The Solar deities are generally associated with ṛta. The gods Varuṇa, Aṇi, and Bhaga are the protectors of ṛta. The twin gods Mitra and Varuṇa aid the growth of ṛta, and try to establish it. Gods like Indra, Viṣṇu, Uṣas, and the Ādityas are also connected with it. The fact that the term ṛta is applied to various gods in some relation or other

21 Vide Lalve P.G., "Studies In Devī Bhāgavata", Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1973, P.3.

22. History of Dharmasāstra, Vol.V, Part-2, P.988.

shows that it is a principle underlying the idea of deity establishing unity in their multiplicity. In the R̥gveda X. 190.1, both ṛta and Satya are said to have come up from the bright penance. At a later stage, ṛta came to denote sacrifice itself, as suggested by expressions, 'R̥tasya nābhiḥ', 'R̥tasya Yoniḥ', indicating the alter or Vēdi.

The Development of R̥ta in the Bandhutā Principle :-

R̥ta has apparently been conceived of (in the beginning) as a greater or more pervading reality than the divinities or the sacrifice, with Varuṇa as its guardian. In this manner the sacrifice and the deities have been conceived as originating in and growing with R̥ta. The spirit of R̥ta continued in the Brāhmaṇa period also and led to the discovery of, 'Bandhutā', mystic principle. It established relations between apparently unconnected entities. In fact, the idea of some eternal reality, signified by the word R̥ta persisted throughout the later philosophical literature and the Darsanas. The transition from the Vedic to the Upaniṣadic period is marked by the ritualistic ideas giving place to the speculations about reality.

The nature of Brahman as described in the Upaniṣads :-

According to the opinion of Dr.P.G.Lal the Prajāpati of the Brāhmaṇas is nothing but the personification of the Vedic idea of R̥ta being the ultimate cause of the

universe. As the influence of Prajāpati began to wane in the Brāhmaṇo-Upaniṣadic speculations, another principle was gradually coming to the fore. Brahman is the absolute reality which is described in the Upaniṣads as the highest goal. It is regarded as one from which the universe is born, owing to which it sustains and ultimately it is dissolved in it. All movements, tastes etc. reside in Brahman, the First Cause, but it is actually devoid of any sound or touch or smell.²³ In the Upaniṣads it is emphatically stated that the absolute is immanent as well as transcendent and that all contradictions about phenomenal and non-phenomenal descriptions are reconciled in the Absolute.²⁴ The Upaniṣads draw the distinction between the lower and the higher aspects of the Brahman. Out of which the higher or the transcendental form is said to be immutable, infinite and devoid of any qualities.²⁵

Monism and Monotheism in the Upaniṣads :-

From the Upaniṣadic conception of Ātman, as eternal and deathless, the thought of the transmigration of individual souls and the attendant law of karma developed. Generally the major Upaniṣads maintained a monistic (Advaita) theory, which ran counter to the idea of Bhakti. However, there are a number of passages indicating the growth of monotheism under the influence of the Bhakti cult

23 Cf. Brhadāraṇyaka UP.III.14.4.; IV.4.5; V.6.1.etc.also Katha UP.III.16, 17.

24 Chāndogya UP.III.9; Kena UP.II.3; Katha UP.I.II.14; Muṇḍaka UP.I.1.6.

25 Chāndogya UP.II. iii.; I. iii.15.

in the Upaniṣads which paved a way for the epic and purāṇic conception of Bhakti. The Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad makes a mention of the word Bhakti and the relevant theistic discussion also.²⁶ The personal aspect of the Brahman Ātman of the Upaniṣads is usually called Īśa, Īśvara or Paramaśvara and Deva. In the Śvetāśvatara UP., the deity in the personalized form is mentioned under different names such as Eka, Deva, Mahān Deva, Maheśvara, Māyī, Śiva (Rudra). It is emphatically stated that the knowledge of this one god will remove the fetters of death and nothing will be gained by one by learning R̥gvedic verses, who does not know Him. That this sectarian outlook tended to dominate the epic theology is clear from the Nārāyaṇīya section and different types of Gītās in the Mahābhārata. Some of the Vedic deities came to be merged in the sectarian gods.

The development of the Personal gods through the Principle Brahman Ātman :-

What was Rta in the Vedas, was sacrifice in the Brāhmaṇas, the Ātman or Brahman in the Upaniṣads and the Personal Gods called Īśvara, Paramaśvara, Deva etc. bearing specific name Rudra, Viṣṇu etc. in the Purāṇas.²⁷ The

26 Cf. Yasya deve Parā bhaktir yathā deve tathā gurau /
tasyaite Kathitā hyarvāṇaḥ Prakāśante mahātmanah //
Śvetāśvatara UP. VI.23

27 Dr. Lelye P.G.: Studies in Devī Bhāgavata, Popular Prakashana, Bombay, 1973, P.12.

personal god was worshipped by various sects and cults under various names. Around every such god, mythology developed. This gradually led to the emergence of various purāṇas.

The nature of Śakti in the Purāṇas :-

Many purāṇas have discussed the question of the origin of Śakti. They have also given their own speculations about Her associations and feets. Dr. Hazra has opined that the Female Deity is of non-Aryan origin.²⁸ He has given some examples of female worship from the mythology of Western countries. It is true that the female deity worship was prevalent in the primitive tribes throughout the world. They worshipped female deities that had magical and shamanistic associations. She is described as seating on lions and is glorified as a Mountain Mother or a vegetable deity. In this way she became associated with people living in mountains and in jungles. Dr. Hazra has also put forth some examples to show that the female deity worship was prevalent in the tribal people of ancient India.²⁹ He has pointed out that the virginity of the female goddess is an essential factor. But in the purāṇas she is a prakṛiti, who has married with the Lord of the Universe (Śiva or Viṣṇu as the case may be). Hence Hazra's statement is to be

28 Hazra : Studies in the Upapurāṇas, Part-II, P.16.

29 Ibid. P.17.

restricted to the deity of primitive tribes only. In the Purāṇas and the Upapurāṇas devoted to the glorification of Śakti or the Devī, the goddess is generally described as the destroyer of the demons, the war goddess, so to say, and thus she is to be worshipped in autumn and spring (Caitrā and Śarat Navarātra¹ festivals), which are highly favourable for martial activities.

Dr.Lalye disagrees with the view of Dr.Hazra. According to Dr.Lalye it is not fully correct to hold that the female deity was worshipped only by the aboriginal tribes. In his thesis in the chapter entitled, 'Doctrine of Śakti in the Devī Bhāgavata', Dr.Lalye has proved that the Doctrine of Śakti - in its personal and impersonal garbs - was not Unknown to the Vedic People. According to him the earliest reference to one such Śakti manifestation is in the Vāgambhṛuṇī Sūkta of the R̥gveda. In it we get the earliest glimpse of the omnipotence of a female deity called Vāk.³⁰ Dr.R.C.Hazra has cited many references to the incarnations of Śakti or the Devī like Umā, Kālī, Vindhyavāsini, Yoganidra, Yogemāya, etc. from various Purāṇas.³¹ Many Purāṇas glorified the Supreme Power Śakti or Māyā by virtue of which Śiva and Viṣṇu became the Supreme gods and could discharge their functions. The idea of Śakti

30 R̥gveda. X. 125.1, 3.7.

31 Hazra R.C., 'Studies in Upapurāṇas', Part-II, PP.18-35.

and Śaktimānā, being at once different and inseparable, was also expounded in the purāṇas. Gradually, this Śakti assumed various names like Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī, Kārvatī etc. in different purāṇas. Towards the close of the Purāṇic age, devotion to this Śakti was considered to be more efficacious than the devotion to its possessor either Viṣṇu or Śiva. This change of emphasis appears to be due to the growth of the Tantric systems. Śakti was also called Devī. Around this Śakti, a lot of mythology grew up, resulting in the appearance of Purāṇas, called Devī Bhāgavata and Mahābhāgavata, exclusively devoted to the glorification of the Devī. It is noteworthy that the Devī is also called Bhāgavatī, adopting the Vedic term - concept of Bhaga, representing energy, which was another aspect of Rta.

The Origin and development of Bhakti :-

As it is already pointed out, the Purāṇas took up the Bhakti element from the later Upaniṣads and developed it with reference to a number of personal gods. It was through their zealous propaganda that Bhakti gained enormous popularity. Various sects, professing Bhakti to one god or the other, and sometimes to great living heroes supposed to be the incarnations of the gods, grew up.³²

The citations from the Viṣṇu Purāṇa,³³ the

32 Bhandarker R.G., Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and other minor religious sects, Indological Book House, Varāṇasī-1965.

33 e.g. Jñānāśaktiḥ Paraśaśvarevīryatejāśyaśeṣataḥ /
bhāgavacchandaśvācyānīvināḥpheyairguṇāśātibhiḥ //
Viṣṇu Purāṇa 6.5.79

Śvetāśvataropaniṣad and the Mahābhāṣya (Patañjali) indicate that the word Bhagavat was generally applied to the supreme being, who is endowed with certain super-natural powers. From the days of the Upaniṣads down to the days of Patañjali and upto the age of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, also the term, "Bhagavat" was applied to both Śiva and Viṣṇu. The word Bhaga came to signify a six-fold power in the days of the Purāṇas.³⁴ The Possessor of it, was called "Bhagavān" - 'Viṣṇu' - omnipresent or omnipotent. It denoted the Highest Reality endowed with supreme power.

Though the worship of Śiva and Śakti was as old as the worship of any other deity, there were some purāṇas and a number of Āgamas and even certain schools of philosophy, upholding Śakti's generally figuring as a consort of Śiva, in the Śaiva literature. Śakti was however, held to be the highest deity embodying the highest power by the Śākta cult and some of the Tantra works. With the growth of the Tantric systems, the worship of Śakti attained prominence and gradually a number of legends grew around Her. Śakti was conceived to be the highest power (Bhaga) as well as its Possessor (Bhagavatī). The ritual Part of the worship gradually receded to the background and devotion - Pure and simple - to Śakti or the Devī came to the fore.³⁵

34 e.g. Aiśvaryasya samagrasya Vīryasya Yaśasah Śriyaḥ /
Jñānavairāgyayoścaiva Saṃnām bhaga itīrena //

35 Lalye P.G. Studies in Devī Bhāgavata, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1973, P.19.

As per the view held by Dr.P.G.Lalve, the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa, the Vaiṣṇava Bhāgavata the Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa and the Śāradātilak (a Tantra work) must have preceded the Devī Bhāgavata. Thus the Devī-Bhāgavata must have attained its final shape in the 11th century A.D.,³⁶ in order to fulfil the need for comprehensive work dealing with the exploits of the Devī and glorifying devotion to Her. The same urge to fulfil the need for comprehensive work dealing with the exploits of the Devī and glorifying devotion to Her, gave rise contemporaneously to another Purāṇa called, "The Mahābhāgavata".

Even though the Devī-Bhāgavata and the contemporaneous Mahābhāgavata Purāṇas appear to be contemporaries, the Presence of the ritual Part of the Worship in the Devī-Bhāgavata and its receding in the background in the Mahābhāgavata Purāṇa and coming to the fore of pure devotion to Śakti in the latter, indicate that the Mahābhāgavata-Purāṇa must have succeeded the Devī-Bhāgavata i.e. the Devī-Bhāgavata must have been a senior contemporary of the Mahābhāgavata Purāṇa.

The Origin and Promulgation of the Mahābhāgavatapurāṇa :-

Regarding the creation of the Mahābhāgavata, and its introduction on earth it is said in Adhyāya first that at the request of Śounaka and others in the Naimiṣa forest

36 Ibid. PP.104, 105.

to describe some Purāṇa on the glory of Devī, Sūta spoke of the 'most secret Purāṇa named Mahābhāgavata' which was first declared by Mahes̥a to Nārada and then by Vyāsa to Jaimini.³⁷ (1.5-9).

Sūta told that being unable to attain mental satisfaction even after writing the eighteen Purāṇas, Vyāsa wanted to become the author of Mahāpurāṇa that would deal elaborately with the praise of Bhagavatī. Consequently, he went to the Himalayas for realising the true nature of Devī by means of austerities. But being directed by Devī's voice from the air, Vyāsa, went over to Brāhmaloka where he was told by the four Vedas that it was Bhagavatī Durgā Herself who was Parama Brahma (1.14-28). Being eulogized by the Vedas, Devī appeared in person before Vyāsa (1.32-38). In order to convince Vyāsa of Her own identity with Supreme Brahma, Devī assumed various forms such as those of a thousand-handed female deity mounted on a lion and furnished with divine weapons, a dark-complexioned and four handed goddess standing on a corpse.³⁸ (Śeva-vāhanī) (1.39-41), female deities having two, four, ten, eighteen, one hundred or innumerable hands, Viṣṇu and Kameṣṭhī, Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā, Brahmā and Vānī, Śiva and Gaurī, and so on (1.42-46).

37 Vaid Kumar Dr. Fustpendra (ed.), The Mahābhāgavata-purāṇa, introduction, P.24.

38 Ibid.

She then revealed to Vyāsa the Purāṇa named Mahābhāgavata which Vyāsa found recorded on the thousand petals of the lotus lying under Her feet. Thus, Sūta said, the Mahābhāgavata was revealed to Vyāsa³⁹ (1.48-49, 151, 54). There are three pairs of interlocutors in the Mahābhāgavatapurāṇa viz. Mahādeva-Nāreḍa, Vyāsa-Jaimini, Sūta-Śaunaka and other sages. Thus this purāṇa was promulgated in the world.

39 Ibid. P.25.