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Survey of the Rājadharmā in the Agnipurāna in the context of the Indian Government and Politics

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“The erring race of human beings dreams of perfecting their environment by the machinery of government and society; but it is by the perfection of soul within that the outer environment can be perfected. (1)

This saying of Rsi Aurobindo, the great Indian nationalist, world visionary and mystic, is being realised by the nation-builders, law-makers and the common people of India. Now India is a sovereign socialist secular democratic republic country. The means of governance and the administrative framework are totally different from the monarchical form of government that prevailed in the age of the Agnipurāna. Vastness of the country, increased population and literacy, westernized education system, impact of modern science and technology, reformed economic policies, globalization, political clunges etc. have made remarkable differences. In spite of radical changes, rapid progress, economic development and noble objectives enshrined in the Constitution of India, India suffers from many diseases. This ancient civilized holy land and the birth place of great men is burdened with the problems like terrorism, unemployment, regional imbalances, poverty, ill-health, infanticide, mal-nutrition, communalism, corruption, domestic violence and criminalization of politics etc.

These make us bound to carry out a comprehensive survey of the Rajadharmā in the context of the Indian

Government and politics in order to sort out some relevant elements of the Rājadharmā. These, if properly applied to, may make India a powerful developed corruption free country. In spite of noble objectives and ideals enshrined in the Constitution of India, deep thoughts provoke and compel us to peep into our Puranic Rajadharmā and to take lessons for the amendments to the Constitution of India.

Source of Rajadharmā or the science of Government in the Agnipurāna :

The Agnipurāna consists of two different versions of the science of government. The first is Puskaraniti. Puskara narrated the science of government to Rāma. Agni repeated what Puskara had narrated. (2) The second is called Rāmoktaniti. Rāma described the science of government to Laksmana. Agni repeated what Rāma had narrated. The Puskaraniti owes to the Matsyapurāna, on the other hand, Rāmoktaniti is entirely based on the Kāmandakiya Nitisāra.

Topics Described in the Agnipurāna:

Chapters 218-242 of the Agnipurāna deal with various topics of the science of government. The important topics are — (3)

Coronation ceremony, king's residence, duties of the king, qualifications and disqualifications of the king, qualifications of ministers, appointment of ministers and officers, means and contrivances to be employed by the king, employment of Danda, march against

the enemies, sādgunya, taxation system, daily programme of the king, warfare, judiciary system etc.

Sources of the Indian Policy :

The Constitution of India is the main source of Indian Policy. It consists of 22 chapters, 395 articles and 12 schedules. Parliament, state legislative assemblies and councils, administrative organisations and judiciaries feed and control the politics of India.

Qualifications of the King according to the Agnipurāna :

The Agnipurāna mentions the following qualifications of a king. (4)

Good descent, good conduct, (young in years, good quality, compassion, quick action, consistency, truthfulness, service to the aged, greatfulness, intellect, fortunate, possessing an unwicked retinue, able to exhibit his valour, faithfulness, foresightness, zeal, purity, generosity, modesty, virtuousness, dedicated to the cause of subjects, sound knowledge in Danda, Anviksiki, Vatra and Arthavidya, brave warrior, eloquent, confident, having good memory, distinguished, strong, leader, self-controlled, well-versed in different branches of fine arts, capable of facing an attack, capable of remedying all evils, capable of knowing the principles of peace-making and war, capable of knowing the secret counsels of the hostiles, knower of opportune time and place, capable of taking goods in the proper way and distributing to the proper persons; free from wrath, greed, fear, doing evil, haughtiness and fickleness; free from harassing others, calumny, jealousy, envy and untruth; fortunate in getting the counsel of the aged, able, showing his amiable manners etc.

Functions of the King :

The king employed all the executive, legislative and judiciary powers. But his main

function was to protect the subjects and give them all the facilities. Joys and happiness of the subjects were the foundation of his kingdom. A simile is given in the Agnipurāna in the context of the duties of a king. He is compared with a pregnant woman. As a pregnant woman ignores her all pleasures and always thinks of the good of her issue, so the king forgets his own pleasures and always thinks of the good of his subjects.

Disqualifications of the King :

The Agnipurāna mentions the following disqualifications of a king (5)

- i) The king should not oppress the poor.
- ii) He should not possess kama (passion), krodha (anger), lobha (avariciousness), harsa (joy), māna (pride), māda (vanity).
- iii) He should not be addicted to the constant company of women.

Qualifications of the Ministers :

The king appoints ministers for good governance. Those ministers should possess the following qualifications (6)

Noble descent, virtuous, brave, learned, attached, well-known to the art of rules of punishment, good physique, a native of the country, endowed with good conduct and knowledge in arts, eloquent, courageous, possessing good eyesight, enthusiasm, devoid of rigidity and fickle mindedness, friendly, capable of enduring hardship, good nature, truthfulness, firmness, perseverance, dignity, good health, ability, having retentive memory, decisive knowledge, good application of mind etc.

India is a federal state. So the provision for both the President and the Prime Minister are laid down in the Constitution of India. The President is the head of the state and the Prime Minister is the head of the government. On the other hand, during the period of

the Agnipurāna, the king had to enjoy the powers what the President, the Prime Minister, the Governors and the Chief Ministers have to do at present. We have only sorted out the qualifications of the President and the Prime Minister of India.

Qualifications of the President of India :

According to the Article 58 of the Constitution of India, a person to be eligible for election as President, must be a citizen of India, must have completed the age of 35 and must be qualified for election as a member of the House of People.

Qualifications of the Prime Minister of India :

According to Article 71 of the Constitution of India, the Prime Minister is appointed by the President of India. Generally the leader of the majority party in the Lok Sabha is appointed Prime Minister. So he should have the qualifications of a member of the Lok Sabha.

Article 84 of the Constitution of India states that a person is not qualified to be chosen to fill a seat in the house of the People (Lok Sabha) unless he (a) is a citizen of India (b) is not less than 25 years of age and (c) possesses such other qualifications as may be prescribed by Parliament.

Disqualifications of the Prime Minister :

Article 102 of the Constitution of India lays down five important circumstances which disqualify a person from being a Member of Parliament as well as the Prime Minister.

a) If he holds any such office of profit under the Government of India or Government of any state.

b) If he is unsound of mind and stands so declared by a competent court.

c) If he is an undischarged solvent.

d) If he is not a citizen of India.

e) If he is so disqualified by or under any law made by Parliament.

Organs of state and the Government according to the Agnipurāna :

According to the Agnipurāna, the organs of a state comprise of svāmi (ruler enjoying sovereignty), amātya (minister), rāstra (territory), durga (fort or defence), kosa (exchequer) bala (armed forces). (7)

Organs of the Government of India:

Every modern government has three organs — the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary. The Government of India has also three organs :

I) The Union Legislature — chapter III, Articles - 79-122

II) The Union Executive — chapter I, Article - 52.

III) The Union Judiciary — chapter IV, Article - 124 -147.

The state governments have also three branches :

I) The State Legislature — chapter III, Article - 168-212

II) The State Executive — chapter II, Article - 152-167.

III) The State Judiciary — chapter V, VI, Article - 214-230, 233-236.

Appointment of officers and personnel by the King :

The significant feature of the policy of appointment was that persons possessing skilled knowledge of a particular thing were employed for that only. The religious minded persons in economic affairs and pure and honest men for every work. Following officers were appointed.(8)

Officers

- Commander of the armed forces — Bmhmīn or Ksatriya.

Qualifications

- Amdassador — Sweet-tongued, capable and strong.
- Defence Minister — well-versed in sādgunya Sabhāsada (members of the royal court) — religious-minded.
- Dhanādhyaksa (Head of the Finance Department) — devoted to the king and should have the knowledge of the jewels
- Vaidy — Conversant with the science of medicine.

Moreover, the king appointed various administrative officers for ruling the country. They are Grāmādhipa (Officer-in-charge of the village), Dasagramadhipa (officer-in-charge of ten villages), Satagramadhipa (officer-in-charge of hundred villages). (9)

The spying system, according to the Agnipurāna, was very strong and active. Spies were his eyes. He employed them everywhere. They guised themselves as merchants, physicians, astrologers, religious mendicants and watched the strength and arrangement of foreign kings. (10)

Appointment of high Ranking Officers by the President of India :

Besides the appointment of the Prime Minister and other ministers, the president has the power to appoint -

- The Comptroller and Auditor General of India - Art 148
- The Judges of the Supreme Court of India - Art 124
- The Judges of the High Courts - Art 217
- The Governor of a state - Art 155
- The Inter-State Council- Art 263
- The Union Public Service Commission - Art 316
- The Finance Commission - Art 324 (2).
- Special Officer for Schedule Castes and Scheduled Tribes - Art 338 (1)
- A commission on Languages - Art 344(1).

Moreover, under Article 320, the Union Public Service Commission performs necessary procedures for appointment to the services under the Union Government.

Coronation of the King according to the Agnipurāna :

The coronation ceremony is an important feature of monarchy. Before the coronation ceremony the king should take a vow to protect all the people. For one year, he should woo his Brahmīn priest, all the wise ministers and the righteous queen. After the lapse of a full year from the date of accession, the coronation ceremony was performed at a proper time. At the time of the coronation ceremony the royal priest should place sesamum on the head of the king and pour water over him. Then the king appointed capable persons to various positions of importance. If the king had died before that, no time was wasted in putting the crown on the head of his successor with all the paraphernalia of regal pomp and coronation rites. The appointment of ministers and officers was made simultaneously.(11)

Oath of office by the President of India and the Prime Minister of India :

Under Article 60 of the Constitution of India, the President of India makes and subscribes in the presence of the Chief Justice of India an oath or affirmation. He is bound by the oath to preserve, protect and defend the constitution and law.

The President of India administers to the Prime Minister the oaths of office secrecy as laid down in the third schedule of the Constitution of India

Military campaign by the King according to the Agnipurāna :

The king appointed strong and stout warriors in his army. He started on military campaign, when he found that his rear was

overpowered by a stronger king whose territories lay next. The king himself took part in the wars. (12)

Military powers of the President of India :

Under Article 53 (2), the supreme command of the Defence Forces is vested in the president. But under Article 53 of the constitution of India the President can not declare war or employ forces without the sanction of Parliament.

Foreign policy as laid down in the Agnipurāna :

The Agnipurāna suggests seven upāyas or ways to be adopted by the king for achieving success in his foreign policy. These are - sima (conciliation), upapradāna or dāna (monetary payment), bheda (dissensions), danda (war or armed forces), māyā (stratagem), upeksha (indifference) and indrajāla (deceit). (13) The sixfold course of action for a king in his foreign policy known as sadgunya comprises of sandhi (alliance) vigraha (war), yāna (expedition), āsana (halt), dvidhābhāva (duplicity) and samsraya (seeking shelter). (14)

The Agnipurāna also refers to the circle of twelve kings based on the diplomatic relation which a king maintains with neighbouring states. (15) They are known as - Ari, Mitra, Arimitra, Mitramitra, Arimitra-mitra, Arimitra-mitra, Vijigisupura, Parsnigraha, Akrandā, Asara, Alaya, Vijigisumandala, satru, Vijigisubhumyastara madhyamamandala.

Foreign Policy of the Government of India :

India's foreign policy includes Pancbasheel, non-alignment, anti-imperialism, anti-racism, anti-colonialism, strengthening of the UNO, disarmament, using of atomic energy to peaceful purpose, support to the comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, special

relations with Asian states, links with commonwealth, fight against terrorism etc.

Crime and punishment laid down in the Agnipurana :

The Agnipurāna prescribes punishment, fines etc. for the various criminal acts. These are substantially based on the Smrtiliterature. Yajnavalkya (16) describes four kinds of punishment in criminal law, namely (i) admonition, (ii) reproof (iii) pecuniary punishment, (iv) corporal punishment. Manu prescribes (17) (i) vākdanda (ii) dhikdanda (iii) dhanadanda (iv) vadhadanda according to the nature and circumstances of the crime. Pecuniary punishment includes fine and forfeiture of property. Corporal punishment includes imprisonment, penal servitude and death sentence. The Agnipurāna also prescribes the following punishments-Fines, banishment, death sentence, excision, shaving the head off seizure of property, forfeiture, swallowing by dogs, burning roasting etc.

Taxation System Mentioned in the Agnipurāna :

Taxes were not classified during the period of the Agnipurāna as today. The king levied a duty on goods manufactured in his own country equal to a 20th part of the gross price. The duty was levied on goods imported from foreign countries. Freights and tolls were not collected from women wandering mendicants. (18)

Taxation system of the Government of India :

Taxation system of the Government of India is based on the canons of equality, certainty, economy, convenience, elasticity, simplicity, diversity and neutrality, "Taxes include the following -(19).

Direct tax, indirect tax, custom duties, service taxes, central excises, capital gain tax,

securities transaction tax and state taxes.

In spite of different steps taken by the Department of Income Tax for checking tax evasion, crores of Indian money are lying with Sviss Bank as black money.

Observation :

The remarkable feature of the monarchical government during the period of the Agnipurāna is that the king himself had to follow the path of honesty and morality. The king was the ideal hero, affectionate father and able guardian of the subjects. The strong moral sense and public opinion which the society had developed, kept the king in check. The Agnipurāna says-(20) 'Janānurāgaprabhava rājno rājyamahisriyah'. Moreover the Prime Minister (mantrin) and other ministers (saciva) were carefully chosen and appointed. There was little chance for them to be corrupted. Constant supervision by the king, strong public opinion and professional ethics of the Ministers brought about transparency in administration and brought in good governance. The king had to possess more than 50 qualities and ministers had to own more than 30 qualities. On the other hand, the Prime Minister of India and other ministers do not have all such qualities as the king and other ministers possessed during the period of the Agnipurāna. The officers during the Puranic period were also skilled. Persons possessing skilled knowledge of the department concerned were appointed to that department. But in India it is not always followed. Party politics, nepotism, corruption and criminalisation of politics have poisoned the air, polluted the whole culture and swallowed the glory of India. M.K. Gandhi, Father of the Nation, warned in 1939 (21).

"I would go to the length of giving the whole congress a descent burial, rather than

put up with the corruption that is rampant."

This outburst of the Father of the Nation was and is shamelessly ignored. Over sixty years of democratic rule has made the people so immune to corruption that they have learnt how to live with the system even though the cancerous growth of this malady may ruin the civilization of India. Series of corruption charges against ministers and others have shaken the root of Indian democracy. India is overburdened with major scandals like Jeep Scandal (1948), Mudgal Case (1951), Mundhra Case (1957), Malaviya Sirajuddin Scandal (1963), Pratap Singha Kairom Scandal (1963), Nagarwala Scandal (1971), Cement Scam (1982), Palmolein Oil import Scam (1992), Purulia Arms Drop case (1995), Telgi Scam (1995), Bihar Fodder Scam (1996), Sukram Telecom Scam (1996), Barak Missile Scandal (2001), Kargil Coffin Scam (2002), Taj Corridor Scandal (2003), Gegong Apang PDS Scam (2001), Natwar Singh Scam (2005), Stamp paper Scam (2006), Cash for Votes Scandal (2008), Satyam Scam (2008), Madhu Koda Scam (2009), 2G Spectrum Scam (2010) Commonwealth Games Scam (2010), Hasan Ali Khan Scandal (2011) etc. (22)

India will be witnessing so many corruption charges and scandals in future. Probably these happen only for the dishonest and corrupted persons who are elected to parliament and legislative assemblies. Honesty is not an essential qualification for them in India, but it was one of the most essential qualifications of the king, ministers and officers in the period of the Agnipurāna.

Conclusion :

The Agnipurāna advocates monarchy which is based on the principle of heredity and the theory of divine origin. Though it is

outwardly autocratic in nature, but in practice it is not such on account of the check exercised by semi-popular, aristocratic and economic corporations like Sreni, Puga, Kula, Nigama etc. Now proper time has come for the rulers of India to review their policies.

They must find some relevant elements in the Agnipurāna to frame rules for becoming ministers and officers and to amend to the Constitution of India in order to seal all the channels of corruption and to uproot some evils of society.

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‘জীৱনৰ বাটত’ উপন্যাসত নাৰীমনস্তত্বৰ প্ৰকাশ : এটি অধ্যয়ন

অধ্যাপিকা (ড°) হেমলতা দেৱী

প্ৰস্তাৱনা :

ড° বিৰিঞ্চি কুমাৰ বৰুৱাৰ ‘জীৱনৰ বাটত’ উপন্যাসখনি চল্লিছৰ দশকৰ এক কালজয়ী সৃষ্টি। সত্যেন্দ্ৰনাথ শৰ্মাৰ কথাবে তেখেতৰ ‘জীৱনৰ বাটত’ যুদ্ধোত্তৰ কালছোৱাৰ উপন্যাস সাহিত্যৰ সিংহদুৱাৰ স্বৰূপ। উপন্যাসখন এটা শতাব্দীৰ ইতিহাস। য’ত প্ৰতিফলিত হৈছে অসমীয়া সামাজিক জীৱনৰ এক অৰ্থবহ হাঁহি-কান্দোনাৰ সংমিশ্ৰিত সংঘাতৰ প্ৰতিচ্ছবি।”

অতীতৰ বক্ষণশীল অসমীয়া সমাজৰ নাৰীৰ পৰা বৰ্তমানৰ আধুনিক শিক্ষিত নাৰীৰ মানসিক, সামাজিক অৱস্থা, ৰীতি-নীতি এই সকলোবোৰেই প্ৰতিফলিত হৈছে ‘জীৱনৰ বাটত’।

এই আলোচনা পত্ৰত উপন্যাসখনৰ নাৰীমনস্তত্বৰ বিষয়ে আলোচনা কৰিবলৈ প্ৰয়াস কৰা হৈছে। ইয়াৰ প্ৰধান নাৰী চৰিত্ৰ ‘তগৰ’ আৰু সুপ্ৰভাৰ মানসিক দ্বন্দ্ব সংঘাতৰ প্ৰতিচ্ছবি চিত্ৰিত হৈছে। উপন্যাসিকে তগৰ চৰিত্ৰটোক প্ৰাচীন আৰু আধুনিকতাৰ এক যুগসন্ধিত উপস্থাপন কৰিছে। বক্ষণশীল পিতৃতান্ত্ৰিক সমাজ ব্যৱস্থাৰ বিৰুদ্ধে প্ৰতিবাদ কৰিব খুজিও পিছ হোঁহকি বোৱা এটি নাৰী চৰিত্ৰৰ মনৰ বিভিন্ন মুহূৰ্তক চৰিত্ৰটোৰ মাজেৰে বিশ্লেষণ কৰা

হৈছে। “সম্ৰাজ্যবাদে ভাৰতীয় সমাজত চলোৱা শোষণ আৰু পৰম্পৰাগত অসমীয়া সমাজখনৰ অন্ধকাৰ দিশবোৰ এনে চৰিত্ৰৰ মাজেৰে চিত্ৰিত হৈছে। সমাজবাদৰ হাতোৰাত তগৰৰ দৰে অলেখনাৰীৰ সপোন হেৰাই গৈছিল। সমাজৰ পৰম্পৰাগত নিয়ম-শৃংখলাত বন্দি নাৰীৰ দুখ আৰু সংগ্ৰামত কোনো উদাৰ চিন্তা অনুভূতিয়ে স্পৰ্শ কৰিব নোৱাৰে। গতিকে তগৰো এনে এক সময় গতিশীলতাৰ নায়িকা।”

বিষয়বস্তুৰ বিশ্লেষণ :

তগৰ চৰিত্ৰৰ মনস্তত্ব :

উপন্যাসখনত আন আন নাৰী চৰিত্ৰ থাকিলেও নায়িকা তগৰৰ সকলো দিশ ফুটাই তুলিব বিচৰা হৈছে। যুদ্ধোত্তৰ যুগৰ সমাজব্যৱস্থাত প্ৰাচীন আৰু আধুনিকতাৰ সংঘাতৰ মাজত নাৰীৰ অৱস্থান সম্পৰ্কে লেখকে এটি সূক্ষ্ম ছবি ফুটাই তুলিছে। ড° হীৰেণ গোঁহাইৰ ভাষাত—‘জীৱনৰ বাটত’ উপন্যাসৰ তাৎপৰ্য্য কিছুমান চৰিত্ৰৰ মনস্তত্ব প্ৰকাশ নহয়—তগৰৰ প্ৰতি কমলাকান্তৰ বিশ্বাসঘাতকতাৰ মাজেদি আধুনিক সমাজ-সংস্কৃতিৰ বিকাশৰ এক অন্তৰ্ভেদী নৈতিক উপলক্ষিৰ উন্মোচনহে।”

কাম চৰাইৰ ৰঙা ঠোঁট,
তাতে দিলে দীঘল ফোঁট

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