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Expiation Rites in Connection with 'Surāpāna' in Manusmṛiti

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Introduction

Sin (*pātaka*) is a word that belongs to the terminology of religion rather than to that of Ethics. It is very difficult to define sin. In a general way it may be said that it is an act which is regarded as a wilful rebellion against or disobedience of some law supposed to be laid down by God or Revelation; it is opposition to the will of God manifested in an authoritative work or at least failure to abide by the regulations contained therein.

Kātyāyana¹ divided sinful acts into five classes viz. *mahāpāpa* (mortal sins), *atipāpa* (the highest sins than which there is nothing worse), *pātaka* (sins similar to mahāpātakas), *prāsāṅgika* (due to association or contact) and *upapātaka* (minor sins). The Bhaviṣya-purāṇa also says that those sins that are declared to be equal to *mahāpātakas* (by Manu and others) are called *pātakas*. Vṛddha-Hārīta also (IX. 215-216) speaks of five kinds viz. mahāpāpa, pātaka, anupātaka, upapāpa and prakīṛṇaka (miscellaneous) and states (IX. 216-218) that those sins which are said to be like mahāpātaka are pātakas, that anupātakas are sins lesser than pātakas, that upapātakas are lesser than pātakas and prakīṛṇaka sins are the least sinful of all. The Viṣṇudharmasūtra (33. 3-5) speaks of nine kinds of lapses viz. *atipātaka*, *mahāpātaka*, *anupātaka*, *upapātaka*, jātibhram.śakara (effecting loss of caste), saṅkarīkaraṇa (rendering one as degraded as a man of a mixed caste), apātrīkaraṇa (rendering the perpetrator unworthy of receiving a gift), malāvaha (causing difilement) and prakīṛṇaka (miscellaneous). Atipātakas, acc. to Viṣṇu Dh. S. 34. 1, are sexual intercourse with one's mother, daughter or daughter-in-law and the only expiation for them is entering fire. Manu omits the separate mention of atipātaka and anupātaka and includes most of them under those that he designates as equal to one of the four wellknown mahāpātaka.

Manu (in chap.xi) refers to all the kinds of pātakas found in the Viṣṇu-dharmasūtra except atipātakas. Usually five mahāpātakas have been enumerated from the days of the Chāndogyopaniṣad (quoted on p.12) viz brāhmaṇa murder, drinking spiritious liquor, theft (generally understood as theft of brāhmaṇa's gold), sexual intercourse with the wife of a *guru* and association with the perpetrators of any of these four (for a year)². Vide Vas I. 19-20, Manu XI.55, 180, Yāj.III 227, 261, Viṣṇudharmasūtra 35. 1-5, Vṛddha-Hārīta XI 174. Manu mentions certain sins as equal to Mahāpātakas which are styled anupātakas by the Viṣṇudharmasūtra chap. 36. The most elaborate treatment of all kinds of sins in the smṛitis is found in Manu, Yāj. and Viṣṇu. There is difference of opinion even among these three on certain points. For example, Manu³ XI, 56 says that forgetting the Veda, reviling the vedas, giving false evidence, slaying a friend, eating forbidden food and food that is unfit for eating or should not be eaten, are lapses similar to drinking surā; while Yāj. III. 228 states that three out of these (viz reviling the Vedas, slaying a friend and forgetting the Veda studied by a person) along with the reviling of a *guru* by attributing false faults are similar to the murder of a brāhmaṇa. The result is that there is an option as to the expiation to be prescribed for these sins.

Surāpāna (drinking of *surā*) has been held to be a mahāpātaka. The word *surā* occurs several times in the Ṛgveda (e.g. Ṛg. I.116.7, I.91.10, VII. 86.6, VIII. 2.12, X.107.9). Ṛg. VII. 86. 6 clearly indicates that *surā* was looked upon by the Ṛgvedic singers as a cause of sin just as much as gambling. Ṛg. I.116.7 (śatam. kumbhān asiṅcatam. surāyāḥ) read with Ṛg. I.117.6 (śatam.madhūnām) implies that *madhu* (honey or some sweet substance) might have been used in preparing sura.

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Soma was a beverage to be offered to the gods and to be drunk by the brāhmaṇa priests and was sharply distinguished from *surā* (e.g. in Tai. S.II. 5.1.1, Yāj, S.19.7, Śat. Br. V.1.5.28). The last furnishes the striking antithesis ‘*soma* is truth, prosperity, light; and *surā* is untruth, misery, darkness’. It appears that long before the Kāṭhaka Sam. hitā brāhmaṇas had come to regard the drinking of *surā* as very sinful [XII. 12 ‘therefore the brāhmaṇa does not drink *surā* (with the idea) that (by drinking it) he may become affected by sin’]⁴. Manu XI. 54 enumerates the drinking of *surā* among the five *mahāpātakas*, Yāj. III. 227 speaks of the *madyapa* (drinker of *madya*) as one of the five great sinners. Therefore we must explain what is meant by *surā* and when *surāpāna* becomes a mahāpātaka. By Manu XI. 93 *surā* is said to be the refuse of food and Manu XI. 94 states that *surā* is of three kinds, viz that prepared from molasses, that from flour and that from *madhūka* flowers (or from honey). There is a great deal of discussion about *surā* in many of the digests and the propositions established by most of them are⁵: (1) that all the three higher varṇas are forbidden to drink the *surā* prepared from flour and drinking it is a grave sin (mahāpātaka) in the case of anyone belonging to the three first varṇas: (2) All intoxicants (*madya*) are forbidden to brāhmaṇas at all stages of life (Gaut. II. 25 ‘*madyam nityam brāhmaṇaḥ*’ and Āp. Dh. S.I.5. 17-21); but a brāhmaṇa drinking *surā* of the *gauḍī* or *mādhvī* kind would not be guilty of mahāpātaka but of anupātaka (acc. to Viṣṇu); (3) that intoxicants other than *surā* prepared from flour are not condemned for kṣatriyas and vaiśyas; (4) the śūdra was not forbidden to drink any kind of intoxicant (including *surā* made from flour); (5) brahmacārins of all varṇas studying the Veda had to abstain from intoxicants of all kinds. The Viṣṇu Dh. S. (22. 83-84) specifies ten kinds of *madya* (intoxicants) prepared from dates, jack fruit, coconuts, sugaracane and Pulastya quoted by the Mit. on Yāj. III. 253, by the Prāyaścittaprakaraṇa of Bhavadeva (p.40), the Prāyaścittaviveka of Śūlapāṇi (p.90) refers to eleven kinds of *madyas* apart from *surā* (dvādaśam tu *surāmadyam sarveṣām adhamam śmṛtam*).

The Mīts. points out (on Yāj. III. 253) that the prohibition against drinking *surā* applies to boys who have not yet been invested with the sacred thread and also to unmarried girls, since Manu XI. 93 makes no distinction of sex but only forbids to the three first castes the drinking of *surā* and since the Bhavisyapurāṇa expressly forbids to a brāhmaṇa female the drinking of *surā*. But a woman and a minor had to undergo lesser prāyaścitta as will be shown below. Vas. 21.11 and Yāj. III 256 state that the wife of a brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya or vaiśya who drinks *surā* (made from flour) would not reach the worlds of her husband and she would become in this world a bitch or a sow. The Mit. remarks on this verse that though a śūdra is not forbidden to drink *surā*, even the śūdra wife of a brāhmaṇa should not drink *surā*.

Drinking *surā* means taking it down the throat. Therefore if a man’s lips only touch *surā* or if *surā* enters his mouth but he spits it out, then there is no drinking of *surā* (i.e. no mahāpātaka) and he would have had to undergo in such a case a light expiation for the touch of *surā*.

Gaut. 23.1, Āp. Dh.S.I.9.25.3, Baud. Dh.S.II.1.21.Vas. 20.22, Manu XI. 90-91, Yāj III. 253 and Bṛhaspati prescribe that if a brāhmaṇa drinks intentionally spirituous liquor prepared from flour even once he has to undergo a penance that ends in death, viz. he has to drink that liquor boiling hot or to drink boiling hot cow’s urine, milk, ghee, water or liquid cow-dung, and when his body has been completely scalded thereby and he dies he becomes free from that sin⁶. Some like Haradatta on Gaut. 23. 1 hold that this horrible penance is meant for one

who knowingly and repeatedly drinks *surā* (manufactured from rice flour). Manu XI. 92 and Yāj. III. 254 prescribe another penance in place of the one ending in death viz. that the sinner should eat during one year (during three years acc. to Yāj.) once (a day) at night the (boiled) small grains of rice, or oilcake, should wear clothes made of cow’s hair, should have matted hair on his head and carry a flagstaff (with a wine cup thereon). The same rules apply to a kṣatriya or vaiśya drinking *surā* manufactured from rice flour). According to Gaut. 23. 2-3, Yāj III. 255, Manu. XI. 146, for drinking intoxicants or human semen, ordure or urine through ignorance a person of the three first classes had first to undergo the penance called Taptakṛcchra and then his *upanayana* was again performed⁷. Vasiṣṭha 20. 19 prescribes for drinking any intoxicant unintentionally the penances of Kṛcchra and Atikṛcchra, the drinking of ghee and the performing of *upanayana* again. There is great divergence of views about Manu⁸ XI. 146 and Yāj. III. 255 which is passed over here. Bṛhaspati quoted by the Mit., and others prescribes that a brāhmaṇa who drinks *surā* prepared from raw sugar, flour and honey (or *madhūka* flowers) should respectively undergo Taptakṛcchra, Parāka and Cāndrāyaṇa⁹. This light penance is restricted acc. to the Mit. and others to cases where *surā* is drunk for curing a malady which no other medicine could cure. If a brāhmaṇa drank *surā* (no manufactured from flour) or any other intoxicant, various easy penances were prescribed for him (such as undergoing Cāndrāyaṇa on a river falling into the sea, feeding brāhmaṇas and donating a cow and a bull to the brāhmaṇas, Parāśara XII. 75-76). Vide Yāj. III. 255 and the Mit. thereon. Kṣatriyas and vaiśyas incurred no sin by drinking intoxicants other than *surā* (made from flour) and the śūdra incurred no sin even by drinking *surā* of the paiṣṭi variety. The Mit. (on Yāj. III. 243) holds that since Manu XI. 93 generally forbids the drinking of *surā* on the part of brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas and vaiśyas the prohibition applies even to boys who have not undergone the rite of *upanayana* and girls who are not yet married and adds that for drinking *surā* the child has to undergo only one-fourth penance (for 3 years) if the offence was unintentional and double of that (6 years) if it was intentional (vide also Pr. prakaraṇa p. 48). Jātūkarnya¹⁰ provides that if a boy whose *upanayana* has not been performed drinks an intoxicant (*madya*) through foolishness, his father, mother or brother should perform three Kṛcchras as an expiation for him. Āngiras Apastamba smṛti III. 7, Laghu-Hārīta 34-35, Bṛhad-yama III. 1-2 also provide that a *pratinidhi* (brother, father, friend) may undergo and expiation for a boy who is himself unable to do so or is less than eleven and above five years of age.

Manu¹¹ provides that the rites of the cutting of the hair and the production of intelligence are optional, there are no express rules about giving the person in charge (of the deities). Viṣṇu (Dh. S. 51. 2-3) provides Cāndrāyaṇa for drinking any of the (twelve) unclean excretions of the body (Manu V. 134) or any of the several kinds of intoxicating drinks and for eating garlic or onion or red garlic or any plant having a similar flavour or the flesh of village pigs, of tame cocks, of apes and of cows and then adds (in sūtra 4) that they (the sinners) must undergo fresh *upanayana* also. The Smṛtis provide different prāyaścittas for various lapses about drinking and eating such as drinking water from a pot which had already been used for holding *surā*, for drinking water from the water vessel of a cāṇḍāla or of a washerman or from a śūdra’s house or for drinking milk which should not be drunk (Gaut. 17. 2-26, Yāj. I. 170, Manu V. 8-10), for eating forbidden food which must be passed over here. Some reference, however, may be made to show how some of these lapses were treated. Śāṅkha states that there are many articles that are allowed or forbidden to

men, particularly to brāhmaṇas and in cases of transgressions the decision rests with the *śiṣṭas* (the *praiśad* of respectable people). Bṛhaspati (quoted by Aparārka) prescribes that in the case of the partaking of things that should not be licked or drunk or eaten or in case of taking in human semen, urine or drunk or eaten or in case of taking in human semen, urine or ordure, the penance of a Cāndrāyaṇa is the purification. Some of the sages such as Samvarta, Saṅkha-likhita took a lenient view, prescribed Cāndrāyaṇa even for eating cow's flesh and human flesh.

The general rule stated by Manu¹² XI, 160 and others is that one desirous of inner purity should not eat forbidden food, that if he eats it through ignorance he should make efforts to vomit it and if that is impossible he should quickly take some *prāyaścitta* (which is slight in the case of ignorance). It may be mentioned that even from very ancient times exceptions were recognised to the prohibitions against the partaking of forbidden food.

According to Indian Express news published on May 10, 2017, The Supreme Court of India order banning establishments selling alcohol 500 metres of all national and state highways. The decision was taken with an aim to curb drinker driving that kills thousands of people each year on Indian highways. The apex court had on March 31 said that liquor vends within 500 metres of highways will have to shut down from April 1 2017. Bihar State Govt. Verdict banning all forms of liquor from April 6, 2016.

Abbreviations

Viṣṇu Dh. S.	=	Viṣṇudharmasūtra
Mit.	=	Mitākṣarā, commentary on
Yājñavalkyasmṛti		
Yāj	=	Yājñavalkyasmṛti
Vas	=	Vasiṣṭha-dharma-sūtra
Rg	=	Rgveda
Tai.S.	=	Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa
Vāj.S.	=	Vājasaneyya Samhita
Śat. Br	=	Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa
Āp. Dh.S.	=	Āpastambadharmasūtra
Gaut.	=	Gautamadharmasūtra
Manu	=	Manusmṛti

References

1. कात्यायनेन तु महापातकसमानां विष्णुनानुपातकत्वेनोक्तानां पातकसंज्ञा दर्शिता। (Mit. on Y1j. III. 242)
2. ब्रह्महत्या सुरापानं स्तेयं गुर्वङ्गनागमः। महान्ति पातकान्याहुः संसर्गश्चापि तैः सह॥ (Manu. XI.54)
3. ब्रह्मोज्ज्वला वेदिनिन्दा कौटसाक्ष्यं सुहृद्दधः। गर्हितानाद्ययोज्ज्वलः सुरापानसमानि षट्। (Manu. XI. 56) गुरुणामध्यधिकेषो वेदिनिन्दा सुहृद्दधः। ब्रह्महत्यासमं ज्ञेयमधीतस्य च नाशनम्॥ (Y1j. III. 228)
4. अतश्च ब्राह्मणादय आततायिनश्च आत्मादित्राणार्थे हिंसानभिसन्धिना निर्वायमाणाः प्रमादाद्यदि विपद्येरंस्तत्र लघुप्रायश्चित्तं राजदण्डाभावश्चेति निश्चयः। (Mit. on II.21)
5. त्रैवर्णिकानामुत्पत्तिप्रभृति पैष्टीप्रतिषेधः। ब्राह्मणस्य तु मद्यमात्रनिषेधोऽप्युत्पत्तिप्रभृत्येव। राजन्यवैश्ययोस्तु न कदाचिदपि गौड्यादिमद्यप्रतिषेधः। शूद्रस्य न सुराप्रतिषेधो नापि मद्यप्रतिषेधः॥ (Mit. on Y1j. III. 253)
6. सुरां पीत्वा द्विजो मोहादग्निवर्णां सुरां पिबेत्। तथा स्वकाये निर्दग्धे मुच्यते किल्विषात्ततः॥ (Manu - XI.90)
सुराम्बुधृतगोमूत्रपयसामग्निर्संनिभम्।
सुरापोन्यतमं पीत्वा मरणाच्छुद्धिमृच्छति॥ (Y1j.III.253)

7. अज्ञानात् सुरां पीत्वा रेतो विष्णुमूत्रमेव च। पुनःसंस्कारमर्हन्ति त्रयो वर्णा द्विजातयः॥ (Y1j III. 255)
8. अज्ञानाद्धारुणीं पीत्वा संस्कारेणैव शुध्यति। मतिपूर्वकमनिर्देश्यं प्राणान्तिकमिति स्थितिः॥ (Manu XI. 146)
9. गौडीं पैष्टीं तथा माध्वीं पीत्वा विप्रः समाचरेत्। तप्तकृच्छ्रं पराकं च चान्द्रायणमनुक्रमात्॥ (B4haspati qu.by Mit.on Y1j III. 254)
10. अनुपेतस्तु यो वालो मद्यं मोहात् पिबेद्यदि। तस्य कृच्छ्रत्रयं कुर्यान्माता भ्राता तथा पिता॥ (J1t3kar7ya qu. by Mit. on Y1j III.253)
11. वपनं मेखला दण्डौ भैक्षचर्या व्रतानि च। निवर्तन्ते द्विजातीनां पुनः संस्कारकर्मणि॥ (Manu. XI. 151)
12. अबोज्यमन्नं नाक्तव्यमात्मनः शुद्धिमिच्छता। अज्ञानभुक्तं तु त्तार्थं शोध्यं वाप्याशुशौनैः॥ (Manu XI. 160)

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