CHAPTER XIII.

I POLITICAL DATA.

The State and the King.

(a) The State:-

Māgha divides the state into seven parts which are called limbs (angam), thus giving it the sense of organism. He refers to these limbs in II. 93, 94. These seven limbs to which the poet makes general references as "angāni" at the above-mentioned places in the poem have been distinctly treated in works on polity. Kauṭilya,[1] Manu[2] and Kāmandaka[3] fully enumerate them. The Śukra-nīti[4] says, " the kingdom is an organism of seven limbs".

(b) King:-

The king was the first and foremost of these seven limbs of the state. The democratic characteristic of the kingship of the Vedic age had become hereditary and divine in the days of Māgha. His ideas about the kingship and the state resemble very much to those of Manu whom he actually refers at two places (I. 67; II.62) in the poem. The king possessed the divine element (XIV. 18) and his authority was unquestioned and unobstructed (XVI. 80).

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1. BK. VI. 1.
2. IX. 294.
3. Kāmandaka-nītiśāstra, VI. 1.
4. I. 121- 122.

The king was designated by attributes like Surājan (XIV. 14), Kṣitipa (XIII. 63), Kṣitipati (XIV. 33), Narādhīpa (XIV. 34) etc. Yudhiṣṭhira is spoken of as obtaining Sāmrājyaśrī (XIV. 88) and is called Dharmavṛkṣa (XIV. 6).

(c) King's paraphernalia:-

The king had splendid paraphernalia. Māgha refers to the following emblems of royalty. They are an umbrella (XIII. 21), a pair of fly whisks (III. 3; XIII. 20) and a golden foot-stool (I. 16; 19; II. 5). It is obvious that some of the royal emblems like the crown with a central gem, a throne, a septre and a canopy of state are left out by the poet as he had no occasion to mention them. Over and above these, there were bards, heralds, tributaries and other attendants. The bards (V. 67; XII. 35; XV. 20) sang his panegyrics and even accompanied him to the battlefield (XVII. 24; XVIII. 16) and sometimes announced the names of the fighting heroes (XVIII. 16). The heralds proclaimed the hours of the day (XI. 1). The vassals waited on him (XII. 1) and carried out his commands (XII. 45) and made presents of precious jewels on special occasions (XIV. 39, 40). An assembly-hall is invariably associated with the meetings conducted by a king (II. 2 and XIII. 50-60).

(d) King's personal qualities:-

Śukranīti[1] lays more stress on the qualities of a king than on the point of birth. Robust health, dauntless courage, clear knowledge of scriptures, righteous conduct, freedom from vices, company

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1. I. 363-64.

of the learned, forgiveness, generosity, patience and self-control are the qualities expected from a king. Our poem informs us that Krṣna possessed all the qualities (XIV. 58) and that Yudhisthira was liberal in giving (XIV. 33-50), generous towards his guest Śiśupāla (XV. 68) and the poet mentions patience as special quality of Krṣna (XV. 40; XVII. 18). Śukranīti[1] points out in this connection that " the man who can protect men, who is valorous, restrained and powerful, and who is the punisher of the wicked is called Ksatriya". This description aptly applies to Krṣna. We are informed by way of a general reference that the kings sleep little (V. 58; XI. 6) and get up early in the morning to meditate on the affairs of the state (XI. 6).

(e) Council of Ministers:-

There is a reference to the council of ministers in II. 2. The important matters of the state were decided by the whole council where the members had full freedom of speech, and the results of the deliberations were kept secret.

(f) Sources of revenue:-

We have the following sources of the state-revenue as gathered from the poem:- (1) presents and tributes, (2) conquests and (3) taxes.

The tributary kings offer highly valuable presents to Yudhisthira at the conclusion of the Rājasūya sacrifice (XIV. 39-41).

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1. I. 81-82.

There is a reference to the collection of tributes by world-conquest in II. 9, 89. The sea-faring merchants (III. 76) who carried on flourishing trade with foreign countries can be inferred as paying taxes in return of the protection afforded to them by the state. The well-known Chinese pilgrim, Hiuen Tsang, who visited India (629 A.D. to 645 A.D.) testifies[1] to the same effect when he says, "Tradesmen go to and fro bartering their merchandise after paying light duties at ferries and barrier stations".

(g) Grant of land:-

The poet mentions the grant of land to Brahmins by Yudhisthira at the conclusion of the Rājasūya sacrifice (XIV. 36) It may be added that Kautilya recommends such grants.[2] Cases of such grants are too well-known in Indian history as shown by copper-plates.

(h) Distribution of land to conquered kings:-

The poet refers to the returning of the conquered countries to their conquered kings at the conclusion of the Rājasūya sacrifice (XIV. 43). Yudhisthira distributed countries amongst the kings defeated by him at the time of world-conquest. This indicates that a king was conquered but his kingdom was not confiscated. The policy of annexation was wisely never adopted.

(i) State-policy:-

The seventh century A.D. in Indian history was a time of political unrest when kingdoms were not steady. Under such circumstances,

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1. OYC. Vol.I. p. 176.

2. Arthaśāstra, BK. II. Ch.I.

it is natural that Māgha reaches the conclusion that the sum and substance of political wisdom is one's own rise and the enemy's decline (II. 30). The kings must have never remained content with what they had acquired but tried to expand their territories at the expense oftheir enemies (II. 32). It was also desired that an ambitious king should acquire political sagacity and the spirit of enterprise as these two were the basis of his prosperity (II. 76). Mere theoretical knowledge of politics is of no avail. The political acumen or the ability to apply theory to practical questions of policy is the most important thing to be acquired by an ambitious king (II. 26, 27).

(j) Envoys and espionage:

Magha refers to the envoy sent by the king Śiśupāla to the court of Yudhiṣṭhira (XVI. 1). Dūta was a diplomatic officer sent to the court of a foreign power to safeguard his master's interest and to collect all the information regarding the strength and the weakness of the enemy and to communicate it to his master or to deliver his master's message to the hostile king as is the case in the poem.

The poet refers to the system of espionage at several places. He tells us that state-craft in which no spies are employed would never succeed (II. 112). The spies, skilled in their work, obtain footing in the principal officers of the enemy and thus sound the enemy (II. 111; XX. 23). The forged letters must have been frequently used by these spies who pretended to be the king's friends, who received salary from both sides and who caused dissention in the ministers of the enemy and who produced the forged letters or documents (II. 113). It appears that the kings believed in the dictum

that intellect is a king's weapon, the seven constituent elements of his government are his limbs, the impenetrable secrecy of his counsels is his armour, his spies are his eyes and his messengers are his mouth (II. 82). Thus diplomacy and secret service were ever active and the kings depended very much on them.

(k) The doctrine of Danda:

This doctrine is vehemently advocated by Balabhadra in his speech (II. 22-66), who lays stress on this point particularly in II. 45. The absence of Danda is tantamount to the 'maxim of fish'. It is not possible for property and Dharma to exist in that state where Danda is absent and it is for this reason that the sage Nārada also requests Krsna to punish the evil-doer (I. 73). For, if there is no Danda, there will be no state and hence there will be neither Dharma nor property. It may be pointed out that Danda according to the Hindu political thought, is a double-edged sword which cuts both ways. On the one hand, it corrects social abuses and is thus a purifying and civilizing force. On the other, it is the most powerful instrument of danger to the ruler himself. The misuse of Danda leads to the fall of the ruler. The point is very well illustrated by Śiśupālavadha in the characters of Krsna and Śiśupāla. The former uses it correctly while the latter goes to the other extreme.

(l) Sovereignty:

From the earliest times, there was the tradition of sovereignty in India. Dr.K.M.Munshi[1] observes: "the Chakravartin, as a

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1. The Glory that was Gurjaradesa III. pp. 45.

concept, was the political counterpart of Dharma. He was the upholder of Dharma par excellence, a supreme vindicator of law, a repressor of lawlessness among kings just as a king was the repressor of the same among his subjects.....Aśvamedha was the emblem of suzerainty."

Yudhisthira, we are told, was such a sovereign who performed the Rājasūya sacrifice (XIV. 88).

The doctrine of Mandala is associated with the doctrine of sovereignty. The poet refers to this doctrine of Mandala or 'Geopolitical sphere' in II. 9, 88; XIV. 13 and XVI. 73. It is based on the idea of sovereignty. In the words of Karl Haushofer, the'Mandala' is a complex of 'geopolitical relations' i.e. all those situations relating to boundaries and contracts with foreign races such as every statesman must carefully attend to.

The doctrine of Mandala is a very important doctrine and pervades the entire speculation on the subject of international politics. It underlies the Hindu idea of the balance of power. It is hinted by Śukra[1] and mentioned by Manu.[2] Kāmandaka[3] has devoted one whole chapter to the topic and Kautilya deals with it exhaustively.[4]

Māgha mentions the doctrine of sovereignty when he says that Yudhisthira attained the position of a sovereign (by performing the Rājasūya sacrifice) in XIV. 88.

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1. Śukranīti, IV. 1, lines 39-43.
2. Manu.,VII. 154, 156, 207.
3. Kāmandaka. VIII.
4. Arthaśāstra. BK.VI.

The Hindu theory of sovereignty did not stop at the doctrine of Mandala. It evolved the doctrine of sovereignty also.

The Aitareya Brāhmana[1] observes: " Monarchy at its highest should have an empire extending right up to the natural boundaries ; it should be territorially all-embracing upto the very ends uninterrupted and should constitute and establish one state and administration upto the seas."

Lord Buddha[2] refers to himself as sovereign when he speaks to Sela, " A king I am, Sela". Of course, the concept has spiritual significance here.

The great epic MBH.[3] explains the concept in the following words. " There are rājans (kings) in every home (state) doing what they like, but they have not attained to the rank of Samrāt; for that title is hard to win."

There is the concept of gradation in the scale of sovereignty and it is recognised by the RV.[4] and the Śatapatha Brāhmana.[5] The gradation is as follows: साम्राज्य, स्वराज्य, वैराज्य, महाराज्य and the highest आधिपत्य .

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1. VIII. iv.1.
2. Sela-sutta in Sutta-nipata III. 7,7: R.S.Hardy: Manual of Buddhism p.126 (London 1880).
3. II. 15.2.
4. IV. xxi. 1.
5. iii. 2. 1,6.

Again, this concept of gradation or rank of states is linked up with the concept of political sacrifices. The Gopatha Brāhmaṇa[1] informs us that Prajāpati became Rājā by Rājasūya sacrifice, Samrāt by Vājapeya, Svarāt by Aśvamedha, Virāt by Puruṣamedha and so forth.

Āpastamba Śrauta Sūtra[2] considers Aśvamedha as highest while the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa[3] remarks: "The office of a king is lower, that of the emperor is higher." Therefore one becomes king by Rājasūya and emperor by Vājapeya. The Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa[4] and Aitareya Brāhmaṇa[5], however, assign the highest rank to the Rājasūya sacrifice.

Although the authorities differ as to the relative rank and importance of the political sacrifices, all of them agree on this point that the sacrifices have a value and it is the greatest power that is entitled to perform the highest sacrifice, whether it is Aśvamedha or Rājasūya. It has been already shown above that according to Māgha Yudhiṣṭhira performed the Rājasūya sacrifice.

The aim and purpose of the doctrine of sovereignty is the establishment of world-unity and the international concord - an ideal which is rightly emphasized even in modern times.

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1. Pt.I, pp. 77,78 in the Biblio.Indica Series.
2. XX. i.1.
3. V. i. I, 13.
4. Vol.II. pp. 2,3 (Rajendralal Mitra: Indo-Aryans, London, 1881).
5. VIII, 21-23.

II. RELIGIOUS DATA.

The poem clearly shows that the religions character of the people was well-developed as they were not sole worshippers of Mammon or grossly materialistic in outlook. The poem again creates an impression that the poet is mostly giving the picture of the contemporary society although he is describing the ancient period- a feature not uncommon in literature. The entire poem breathes the Paurāṇic atmosphere.

Pantheon: The Vedic gods mentioned by Māgha in the poem have lost their Vedic traits and are drawn in the Paurāṇic fashion. Thus Agni (XIV. 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29), Indra (I. 8; IV. 13; IX. 80; XIII. 15; XIV. 36, 84; XX. 73), Sūrya (XI. 25, 43-46), Tvaṣṭr(III. 35(, Varuṇa (I. 56), Viṣṇu (identified with Kṛṣṇa, referred to at several places, and Yama (I. 57, 53; XVIII. 67-9; XIX. 28, 71; XX. 4, 12, 46) are no longer Vedic in character and have lost their anthropomorphic features too. Over and above this, there are several new entrants to the old pantheon e.g. Aruṇa (I. 2), Brahmā (I. 28; III. 65; IX. 9, 14; XIII. 19; XIV. 82; XVII. 54; XVIII. 40), Kāma-deva (VI. 9, 77; VII. 50; VIII. 43; IX. 45, 63, 67; XIV. 18), Kubera (I. 55; III. 1; XIII. 18), Śiva (I. 4, 49; III. 61, 62, 65; IV. 5, 7, 28, 64, 65; VIII. 33; IX. 42, XII. 69; XIII. 29, 33, 39, XIV.18, 85; XVI. 46, 58, 71; XVII. 7, 10; XIX. 54) and Vināyaka (I. 60). Candrikā (XVIII. 50), Mahākālī (XVII. 44), Pārvatī (I. 50; XIII.33, 39) and Śrī (I. 44; II. 118; VIII. 15, 64; IX. 30; XII. 37; XIX.88) are the Paurāṇic goddesses mentioned in the poem.

Demonology: The poet refers to a pretty large number of the enemies of gods. Of these demons, Vṛtra alone (I. 41; V. 31; XIV. 84) is a Vedic demon. The rest e.g. Bakāsura (XIX. 114), Bali (VI. 27), Hidimba (II. 60), Hiraṇyakaśipu (I.42-47), Kaitabha (I. 23; XIV. 68), Kālīya (XVII. 69; XIX. 28), Kamsa (I. 39; XV. 38), Kuvalayāpīda (XVI. 59), Madhu (XIV. 68), Mura (II. 1), Namuci (I. 51), Naraka (II. 39; VIII. 15; XII. 3; XV. 32, XVI. 8), Rāhu (II. 35, 49; XVIII. 59; XX. 45, 78), Rāvaṇa (I. 48-68), Śiśupāla (I. 69-73; II. 1, 11, 38, 39, 40, 41, 60, 95-99, 101, 108, 116; XV. 1-45, 62-72; XVI. 1-4, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 20, 25, 33, 34, 36, 44, 48, 50, 51, 53-55, 57-60, 62, 64-85; XIX. 42, 82; XX.), Śakaṭāsura (XI. 3, XV. 37; XVI. 8) and Vṛṣabhasura (XV. 35) are Paurāṇic.

Polytheism: The references to a number of gods in the poem point to the people's belief in the doctrine of Polytheism. But to the poet Māgha, Kṛṣṇa is supreme. God Kṛṣṇa is omniscient and omnipotent. According to him, the universe is part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa as He is the cause and end of the universe. Kṛṣṇa is the creator, upholder and destroyer of the universe (XIV. 66). He is God par excellence (XIV. 62). Thus there is an idea of unity running through the multiplicity of gods and goddesses. Though the poet's favourite god is Kṛṣṇa, he is not a sectarian. The catholicity of his mind in matters of religion can be easily inferred from the respectful mention of other gods and from the fact that he considers even Mahavīra as one of the incarnations of Viṣṇu (XIX. 112).

Idol worship:-

The number of gods mentioned above might have been worshipped in the form of their idols. It is well-known that the idol-worship existed in Mauryan, Kuṣāna and Gupta periods. The Gupta epigraphs refer to their existence. As Māgha belongs to post-Gupta period, we can safely infer the existence of the idol-worship in his days.

Institution of Sacrifice:

Māgha describes Rājasūya sacrifice (XIV. 18-52) at great length which was performed by Yudhiṣṭhira with the help of the Ṛtviks (XIV. 19, 22), Mīmānsakas (XIV. 20) and those priests who sung Sāmaveda (XIV. 21). At the commencement of the sacrifice, the sacrificer underwent an initiatory ceremony called dīkṣā and Śiva was supposed to enter his body at that time and make it as sacred as himself (XIV. 18). An important ceremony called Avabhṛtha (XIV. 10) marked the end of the sacrifice, It was a purificatory bath at the end of a great sacrifice. Dakṣiṇā was an essential gift to officiating priests at the conclusion of a sacrifice. Yudhiṣṭhira gives very liberally to the Brahmins at the successful termination of the Rājasūya (XIV. 33-42). Even the dethroned kings were re-installed on their thrones (XIV.43). Māgha deals more with the purificatory aspect of the sacrifice than with its technical one. Agnihotra is also referred to in (XI. 41). The detailed information on this topic is given elsewhere (Vide Ch. XI.).

Other Methods of Worship and Austerities:

Over and above the institution of sacrifice, there were other methods of worship. The act of worship is referred to as Saparyā (I. 14) or Apaciti (I. 17). Arghya which was a preparation of honey and clarified butter mixed with certain other things was offered to guests (I. 14). The Agnihotrins offered oblations in the Ahavanīya fire every morning at the sun-rise (XI. 41). The ascetics repeated the recitation of sacred Mantras at the sun-rise (XI. 42) and told on the beads of rosary (I. 9). The yogins busied themselves in deep meditation and tried to bring about the destruction of the Kleśas (IV. 55). It appears that the ascetics performed tapas i.e. self-mortification. The poet refers to Pancāgnitapas in II. 51. The people paid their salutations to the rising sun every morning (XI. 48) and to the evening twilight every evening (IX. 14).

Those who were well-versed in scriptures were afraid of transgressing the moral bounds (X. 40). The yogins (the self-controlled) easily observed the rules and regulations of the religious life (XIII. 23).

Cosmogony:

There are several allusions to the creation and the destruction of the universe. In XIV. 7, we are told that Hari first created water and placed his seed there which was the cause of the birth of Brahmā who created the entire universe. This account of creation is

exactly the same as given in the Manusmrti.[1] At another place Krsna is called Māyāvin who creates Māyā in the form of the universe (XX.32). The creation issues from the limbs of Visnu (III. 65).

It is interesting to observe in this connection that according to Māgha the world is a reality and not an illusion. He does say that the world is a stage (XIV. 63) but nowhere in the whole of the poem he speaks of the illusory character of the world. The reason for this, as given in the poem, is that the entire creation issues forth from the limbs of Visnu (III. 65) whose full incarnation is Krsna. When the creator himself is real, his creation cannot be an illusion. Hence, as a pre-Sankara writer, Māgha's opinion on this point is important from the point of view of the History of Vedānta.

Like Visnu, Brahmā is also considered the author of this creation by our poet. Brahmā is the creator of the universe (I.28) and he creates this universe when his rajas suppresses the sattva (XVII.54). An interesting mythological story is alluded to in XVIII. 40 in this connection. According to one interpretation of this allusion contained in the verse, Brahmā once entered the stomach of Visnu to study the universe contained there with a view to creating future ones on that model. Brahmā cut the Brahmāṇḍa into two with his nails (IX. 9).

The poet also refers to the destruction of the universe at several places in the poem. God Visnu sleeps with His Consort Laksmī in the ocean after withdrawing the universe at the end of Kalpa (XI.66). He is said to drink all the worlds at the end of Kalpa (XIII.40).The poet refers to the destruction of the entire universe by deluge in XVI.51 and XVII.40.

1. Manu.I.8-9.

Religious Beliefs:

It was believed that the gods eagerly awaited to partake of the oblations offered to them in a sacrifice (XIV. 29) and that they attained immortality by eating these oblations which made them strong and enabled them to defeat the demons (XIV. 31). The people again believed that the gods are won over by offering them oblations in a sacrifice (II. 106). The evening twilight was considered to be the visible image of Brahmā (IX. 14). This belief is also entertained by the Bhavisya Purāna.[1] The twilight was believed to be the mother of manes (IX. 14). The flowers enjoyed by others were useless for the purposes of worship (XI. 36). The setting sun was supposed to deposit his light in fire (IX. 13). It was believed that the good actions follow their performer (III. 26).

The Religious Cults:

The poem informs us that several religious cults were followed by the people. We have allusions to Buddhism (II. 28), Jainism (XIX. 112), Śaivism as is apparent from numerous references to Śiva, probably Śakti worship (XVII. 44; XVIII. 50) and Vaisnavism. From the sympathetic references made to Buddhism and more particularly to Jainism, one is led to believe that the poet has some motive in doing so. He himself was born in a pure Vedic tradition and remained its staunch follower throughout his life. He was a devotee of Lord Krsna and his heart was full of love and devotion

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1. पितामहः पितॄन्सृष्ट्वा मूर्तिं तामुत्ससर्ज ह।
सा प्रातः सायमागत्य संध्यारूपेण पूज्यते॥

for Him. Inspite of all this, he shows marked sympathy towards two non-Brahmin faiths, viz, Buddhism and Jainism. There may be one of the following two possible motives behind this tendency.

(1) To please and win over the royal relations and the rich men who were followers particularly of Mahavīra in the Gujarat of those days.

(2) The real and honest yearning for compromise between the contending sects and to establish harmony and peace- spirit of universal brotherhood.

It does not stand to reason to believe that with all his learning, generosity and broad outlook on life, he would stoop so low in order to win fleeting cheap popularity. It is not likely that the desire for name and fame might have actuated him to this religious synthesis.

On the contrary, the same qualities of the head and heart might have prompted him to attempt the other. Moreover he flourished at a time when religious toleration was shown even by kings like Harṣavardhana.

Of all the religious cults mentioned in the poem, the Kṛṣṇa cult or Bhakti cult is most predominant, in the poem. It is said that the Bhakti cult came into prominence during the Gupta period.[1] If it is true, it must have fully developed by the time of Māgha. Kṛṣṇa at that time was regarded as incarnation of Viṣṇu and was

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1. उत्पन्ना द्रविडे देशे वृद्धिं कर्णाटके गता ।
क्वचिन्क्वचिन्महाराष्ट्रे गुर्जरे जीर्णतां गता ॥ I.47
— भागवतमाहात्म्य

worshipped as such by the people. He was, by then, omniscient, beginningless, endless, and coming down to the world to oblige humanity by remaining above the fetters of Karma (XIV. 62). Devotion to him was calculated to be the meritorious act and sure means to liberation from the cycle of birth and death (XIV. 63). The net-work of stories about him appears to be popular with the masses (XII. 38) who believed him to be the slayer of all evil-doers (XV. 23-28). Perhaps the Bhāgavata Purāṇa which is the sheet-anchor of Kṛṣṇaism was known to Māgha.

The popular notion about Kṛṣṇa is that he holds the famous Sudarśana disc, Kaumodakī mace, Nandaka sword, Śārṅga bow and Pāñcajanya conch (III. 17-21). His head is adorned with a crown and his ears with ear-rings (III. 4,5). A necklace of pearls encircles his neck and a gem called Kaustubha is suspended on his chest (III. 8, 9). He wears a bright yellow garment (III. 11). Śrī or Lakṣmī rests on his bosom (III. 12, 13).

The Doctrine of Incarnation:

The doctrine of incarnation is the essential part of religion. Māgha's conception of incarnation is the appearance of Godhead in human or animal form. Māgha describes various special incarnations of Viṣṇu which are Varāha, Nṛsimha, Vāmana, Mohinī, Dattātreya, Paraśurāma, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa (XIV. 71-86). The object of the deity incarnate is to eradicate the material interference by a physically existent power of evil e.g. Rāvaṇa (I. 48-68),

Hiraṇyakaśipu (I. 42-47) or Śiśupāla. The author of the Rāmāyaṇa[1] also holds the same view in this respect. It happens sometimes, as is suggested by Māgha in I. 49 and 50 that the activities of the forces of evil orginate from the boon granted to them by Godhead in some form. As the poet informs us , the great demon Rāvaṇa secured his desired boon from Lord Śiva by propitiating him (I.49, 50).

The law governing the extraordinary manifestations or the special incarnations of the Supreme Being is enunciated in the Bhagavadgītā (IV. 7),[2] Rāmāyaṇa (VII. 8, 27)[3], Durgā-sapta-śatī[4] and Kālidāsa's Raghuvaṁśa (XV. 4)[5]. The object of the incarnation is not mere destruction of the forces of evil but the establishment of law and order.

Māgha's whole poem is an apt illustration of the above law. Śiśupāla is not only a wicked man but the enemy of culture and civilization, law and order; in short, the arch-enemy of Dharma.

Moreover, it appears that Kṛṣṇa, in the opinion of Māgha, is not a partial incarnation of Viṣṇu but 'God himself'. He believes that Kṛṣṇa is the most glorious of all the human manifestations of

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1. VI. 117/28. वधार्थं रावणस्येह प्रविष्टो मानुषीं तनुम् ।
2. BhG. IV. 7: यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य etc.
3. Ram. VII. 8.27: नष्टधर्मव्यवस्थानां काले काले etc.
4. Durgā: इत्थं यदा यदा बाधा दानवोत्था भविष्यति ।
तदा तदावतीर्याहं करिष्याम्यरिसंक्षयम् ॥
5. Raghu. XV. 4: धर्मसंरक्षणार्थैव प्रवृत्तिर्भुवि शार्ङ्गिणः ।

God. He is in complete agreement with the author of the Bhāgavata I. 3. 28, who holds:

एते चांशकलाः पुंसः कृष्णस्तु भगवान्स्वयम् ।
इन्द्रारिव्याकुलं लोकं मृडयन्ति युगे युगे ॥

Māgha honestly believes in Kṛṣṇa as the Highest Reality, the Absolute of philosophers. His belief is not merely a doctrinaire convention drawn on for its literary values. He has in fact unflinching faith in Kṛṣṇa alone (XIV. 63).

The order in which Māgha describes the various incarnations of Viṣṇu is in agreement with that given by the Bhāgavata with the only change that Māgha deals with principal incarnations only.

One thing deserves special notice in this connection. There is the conflicting account of the Varāha incarnation given in the old sources according to W.J. Wilkins.[1] The older books and some of the modern ones describe it as an incarnation of Brahmā while some of the modern books and the popular belief regarding it as the work of Viṣṇu. But there is one distinction as is pointed out by Goldstucker[2]. "In the former, the transformation of the deity into a boar has apparently a purely cosmical character,"the earth being immersed in the ocean. Brahmā, the creator, in the shape of a boar, raised it on his tusk; "whereas, in the latter, it altogether represents the extrication of the world from a deluge of iniquity by the rites of religion." Dr.Muir[3] also gives two accounts

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1. Hindu Mythology, pp. 144-5.

2. Chamber's Cyclopaedia, s.v. 'Vishnu'.

3. Muir, O.S.T; IV. 33.

of this incarnation from two recensions of the Rāmāyaṇa. In one, which he considers older, it is said that Brahmā assumed the form of a boar; in the other, Viṣṇu in the form of Brahmā is said to have accomplished this work.

Māgha considers this incarnation as the incarnation of Viṣṇu (XIV. 71). He seems to follow popular and later beliefs

According to Dr.Bhagavan Das[1], there are three main kinds of disorder requiring to be cured and three main kinds of great men that appear to cure them.

(a) " When false teachers and false teachings which would elevate the things of the flesh above the things of the spirit begin to prevail .....; then the teachers appear to re-illuminate the Science of Spirit and infuse the beauty of the ideal into the coarseness of the real."

All the great seers, poets, philosophers and scientists of all lands and ages are high or low manifestations of these.

(b) "When wrong emotions, the lower passions, false worships of over-sensuous gods, and the causes that increase lust, hate, greed, pride..... begin to grow and multiply, then the devotion-inspiring manifestations occur."

Buddha, Chaitanya, Christ, Kabir, Mahavīra, Rāmānuja, Sūr, Tulsi and others in various degrees, may be regarded as types of this class of manifestations.

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1. Krshna: pp. 26-29, Madras, 1924.

(c) "When wrong knowledge and wrong desire have not been cured in time, but have gained the upper hand ..... when the forces of evil selfishness and ruthless ambition, in the shape of cruelly selfish men, have obtained and held sway for their appointed term, gained by previous experience and tapasya, then the history-making avataras proper appear, the adjusters of national karma, the righters of the wide spread wrongs."

Kṛṣṇa, Rāma and Paraśu-rāma are the outstanding examples of the last category.

Māgha describes these three incarnations as the remover of the widespread wrong and lays particular stress on the Kṛṣṇa incarnation of Viṣṇu.