CHAPTER – 6

CONCLUSION

The sixth chapter of this thesis is devoted to presentation of the summaries of the findings placed in the previous chapters on the Paraśurāma legend. Again in this chapter, it is tried to discuss some important aspects related Paraśurāma’s life.

In chapter I (Part A), a brief discussion is given on legends and myth. From this discussion it is very much confirmed that Paraśurāma is included in the category of legend and not in the category of myth, because in the concept of legend, there exist some historical elements which are based on facts. Again the legend involving Paraśurāma may be included in the category of heroic legend, because his heroic nature is found extensively narrated in the epics, Purāṇas and other Sanskrit works. He was present at the war council of Kaurava prices before the great central war of the MB.

In chapter I (Part B) there is discussion about incarnation and also Paraśurāma as an incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu.

First it is clear that Paraśurāma is not a single human being. Because he is found mentioned in the RM as well as in the MB also. It is impossible for a single human being to live from the RM period to the MB
period. Because there is a big gap between the two periods. According to historical evidences the RM was written in 500 B.C. and the MB was composed in 3000 A.D.

The various Sanskrit works accepted Paraśurāma as an incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu. In the list of the incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu, there are found five human incarnations. Among them Paraśurāma is a prominent one. Again incarnations have been classified into three categories which are already discussed briefly. Paraśurāma belongs to the third one i.e. partial incarnation of a temporary nature. Lord Kṛṣṇa is the example of the first category i.e. the complete incarnation. But in the Vibhūtiyoga of the Bhagavadgītā¹ (X.31) Paraśurāma is identified with Kṛṣṇa. Citing relevant references this is discussed in the chapter I (Part B).

To destroy the whole Kṣatriya race, Viṣṇu incarnated himself as Paraśurāma. Paraśurāma was a brāhmaṇa by birth. Therefore the story of Paraśurāma gives us a real picture of the fighting in between brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas at that time.

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1. pavanaḥ pavatāmasmi rāmaḥ śastrabhṛ tāmaham /
   īśānāṁ makarasāsmi strotāsāsmi jāhnavī/ Gītā, Vibhūtiyaga,31
A question related to Paraśurāma legend is that both the killing of mother and the destroying a caste, are unpardonable crimes. But after doing both the crimes Paraśurāma could become an incarnation. In this connection it can be said that in the background of every incarnation, there has to be a reason. According to the Gītā, the concept of incarnation is that whenever mischievous activities occur in the society then Lord incarnates himself to establish the rule of virtues. From this point of view, annihilation of the Kṣatriya race by Paraśurāma was not a crime. At that time the cruel anarchy of the Kṣatriyas was predominant in the society and as an incarnation of Viṣṇu, Paraśurāma had to do this.

But killing of mother is indeed an inexcusable crime. That is the reason why Paraśurāma had to suffer for a long time although he was an incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu. The axe which stacked in his hand due to the sin was freed off after a very long time.

Paraśurāma has figured in the two great epics of India viz. the RM and the MB. In the Adikāṇḍa of the RM, there is found a glorious incident. Here Paraśurāma, one of the human incarnation of Viṣṇu, fought with another human incarnation i.e. Rāma. Both are great warriors. In this war, the superiority of Rāma is declared. Again in the MB, also Paraśurāma fought with many great brave warriors. From this it can be
concluded that most of the brave heroes of the epic age, in order to face some of the great figures of that age, first tried to establish enmity with them.

In the MB Paraśurāma is depicted as a superman. The name of some great warriors of this epic is Vhīṣma, Droṇa and Karṇa. Paraśurāma was the teacher of all these personalities. In this connection the story of Paraśurāma and Karṇa is as follows—

Paraśurāma taught the knowledge of the science of arms to Karṇa. For Indra Viśvakarmā made a bow called ‘Vijayā’. Indra used, it to destroy the demons. Paraśurāma, at that time was indulged in destroying the Kṣatriya caste. Indra gave this bow to Paraśurāma for his help. Later in the battle of Kurūkṣetra, Paraśurāma gave this bow to Karṇa.2

Another interesting story, related to the relationship of Paraśurāma and Karṇa is found in the MB. Karṇa, to fight with Arjuna who was a great warrior, wanted to learn the proper use of Brahmāstra

2. śri krṣṇa valen, śuna dhananjaya vīr samhāra karila sava sainya karṇavīr /
   paraśurāma astra karila sandhāna laksya koti vāna māre dekha vidya māna //
   Kaśīḍāśī Mahābhārata, Karṇa Parva.

that was originally a demon, Grtsa by name. Due to the curse of Bhṛgu, he
became a warm. When the demon appealed for the end of his curse, Bhṛgu suggested him to return back his life by Paraśurāma. Thus the demon regained his origin form. From this incident Paraśurāma came to know that only a Kṣatriya could tolerate such agony but not a brāhmaṇa so he cursed Karṇa to forget the use of weapon at his last hour. Even then no Kṣatriya would be able to be equal with him in prowess.

PARAŚURĀMA AND DROŅA

Droṇa, the son of Bharadvāja obtained the knowledge of special missiles from Paraśurāma (MB 1.121). After taking all the technique from Paraśurāma, Droṇa became the great warrior of the great Kurūkṣetra war.

PARAŚURĀMA AND BHĪṢMA

Bhīṣma is considered as one of the chief personalities in the MB. He was also the disciple of Paraśurāma. There was enmity between Paraśurāma and Bhīṣma in the Udyogaparvan of the Ambapākhyaṇa, which is already discussed. For twenty three days they fought in the

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5. kon velā kon śara hānite lāgaya
   si savaka karṇe pasarilā samudāya/
   paraśurāme śapi tāka ācaya pūrvata
   samayara śara tān napare manata //
   ibid. 26867
Kurukṣetra. Finally the war came to an end when Paraśurāma admitted defeat.

Paraśurāma was a follower of the patriarchal society at that time. So he cut off his mother’s head to follow his father’s order. But he could not free his mind from that sin. That is why he helped Ambā without any prior agreement. Ambā was also a lady oppressed by male.

Paraśurāma was also a peace maker. His irritable and revengeful natures are described here and there in the epics and other works. But Paraśurāma as a peace maker is also focused in the MB. As we find there the story goes as follows—

Kṛṣṇa, a mediator between the Kauravas and the Pāndavas wanted to put an end to the Kūrukṣetra war. He went to Hastināpūra with this noble aim. After hearing about the discussion between Kṛṣṇa and the Kauravas, Paraśurāma also reached there with some sages. In the meeting he cited a story to solve the problem. The story was as follows—

Dambhodbhava, a famous king one day challenged Nara and Nārāyaṇa, the two great sages who lived at the Gandhamādana for penance. Then the sages wanted to teach him a lesson. Nara threw some grasses on the enemy. Immediately the grasses got changed into weapons. With the help of the weapons Nara cut down different limbs of the enemies of the king. In this way Nara tried to explain to be kind hearted to all
living creatures. With the help of the story Paraśurāma tried to change the mind of Kauravas. According to him Arjuna was the Nara and Kṛṣṇa was the Nārāyaṇa.6

In the Āśvamedhikaparvan of the MB Paraśurāma was seen as a Yogi which is already pointed out in the 2nd chapter. Paraśurāma was inspired by hearing the story of Alarka and engaged himself in Yogā.

The Purāṇas are treated as one of the important sources of the Indian legends. Many characters of importance in the realm of Indian culture and tradition are found to be portrayed in the Purāṇas.

The Purāṇas speak about the two important families of Bhārgavas i.e. Uṣanas Śūkra and Cyavana who occupied different regions. Cyavana married Sukanyā, the daughter of Sāryati who was the Lord of Ānartā (Gujarat region). He performed austerities near the mountain Vaidurya, which is the western part of the Sātpurā range. Therefore it indicates the connection of Cyavana with the West India. Paraśurāma is regarded as one of the brilliant products of his family. It is believed that he lived in Sūrpāraka country which is near Mumbai. On the other hand the Uṣanas-Śukra was connected with the central region of Northern India

6. nara nārāyanau jau tau tāvenārjunakeśavau / vijānihi mahāraja pravrāu puruṣarsabhau// Mbh 5.94.42

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nearer present day Allahabad. In this way two major divisions of the Bhārgava family were associated with two different regions of India.

The *Vāyupurāṇa* gives the list of the Bhārgava which is as follows –

![Family Tree Diagram]

But *Matsyapurāṇa* gives another list

![Family Tree Diagram]

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The birth history of Paraśurāma is narrated in the *Skanda-purāṇa*, in the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* and in the *Kalikāpurāṇa* in a similar way. But some differences are noticed. In the *BhP* Kārtavīrya reached the hermitage of Jamadagni voluntarily whereas in the *SKP* the king was invited by the sage. Again in the *BhP* there is no description of the war held in between the king and the sage. But *SKP* gives a broad description about the war.

In the *KP*, the colour of the two *carus* which were handed over to Satyavatī by Rīcika were mentioned. But in the *BhP* Rīcika himself prepared two *carus* for his wife and his mother-in-law and there was no mention of the colour of carees. This is already discussed with relevant quotations in the chapter III.

In the *Agni-purāṇa* and in the *Vāmanapurāṇa* it is mentioned that Paraśurāma made five takes by the blood of the Kṣatriyas in Kūrukṣetra. How could Paraśurāma create five lakes with the blood of the dead Kṣatriyas remains a question and this question remains unanswered. There is no explanation as to how he collected so much quantity of blood with the help of a single axe.

Paraśurāma’s fight with Ganeśa and the reason of Ganeśa being named as *Ekadanta* is found in the *Brahmavivarttapurāṇa*. 108
From the *Nilamata-purāṇa*, it comes to be known that Parasurāma originally appears to have been a Śaiva, represented as an incarnation of Viṣṇu. But *Nilamata-purāṇa* depicts him not only as an incarnation of Viṣṇu but also as a devotee of Viṣṇu. In the NP the verses 1167-1226 give the story of Paraśurāma.

Paraśurāma has found place in many Sanskrit creative and allied literatures. The above topic has been discussed in chapter IV. The literary works like the *Mahāvīracaritam*, the *Prasannārāghavam*, the *Campūramāyaṇam*, and the *Bhaṭṭikāvyam* etc. are based on the RM. The poets of the RM have focused Paraśurāma in a particular place only. That is the reason why the writers of the above kavyas have placed Paraśurāma in a similar way. In all these works, the humility of Rāmachandra and the haughtiness of Paraśurāma are noticed. The only aim of Paraśurāma was put off the ego of Rāma. He thought that by breaking the bow of Śiva, Rāma had become proud. So he gave Rāma the Vaishnava dhanu to break. Rāma easily broke this bow which was known as *brahmabhedi* (penetrating the *brahmaloka*). But after he realized that Rāma was not a simple human being, he was the incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu. So he checked his anger and blessed Rāma and went to the Mahendra mountain. This is Paraśurāma who gifted the disc called *Sudarśana* to Kṛṣṇa in order to maintain the rule of the world after getting the knowledge of Śastras from
Sandipāni, his preceptor. From all these narrations, it comes to be known that though by nature Paraśurāma was irritable and revengeful, yet he had the ability to control his anger at times.

The story of the *Vighneśajanmodaya* was taken from the *Brahmavaivarttapurāṇa*. Herein is found a detailed description of Paraśurāma’s earning power from Sīva. *Anargharāghava* also described Paraśurāma as a pupil of Śiva. He had acquired the thorough knowledge of the *Sāmaveda* and *Cāpavidyā* along with Kartikeya from Lord Śiva.

Paraśurāma can be described as the metaphorical representation of some philosophical ideas. In the section XXIX of the *MB* (*Āśvamedhikaparvan*), there is found Paraśurāma as a *Yogī*. Here, after hearing the story of Alarka from his forefather, Paraśurāma felt that only from *Yoga* men could be free from difficulties. *Yoga* can control the sense organs. In the 11nd chapter of the *Śrīmadbhāgavatgīta*, Lord Kṛṣṇa advised Arjuna to become a *Sthitaprajña* (a person having equilibrium of mind). Because at that time Arjuna’s mind was also in great difficulties. So Kṛṣṇa helped him to set him to set his mind on one object by the process of *Yoga*. Paraśurāma also engaged himself in *Yoga* to control his mind.

According to the scriptures, in a human body there are twenty one types of enemies. They are five *karmendriya*, five *jñānendriya* five
tanmātra, five tattvas and the last one is mind. In this connection it can be said that destruction of the Kṣatriyas for twenty one times by Paraśurāma is very significant.

Again the Reṇukātantram is also related to Yoga because Reṇukā, the form of Chinnamastā is the presiding duty of yogīs and she is also the mother of Paraśurāma. From this point of view Paraśurāma is related to yoga. In this tantra text, the way of the success of the devotees of Paraśurāma is mentioned.7

The Paraśurāmakalpasūtram bears some philosophical discussions. Though there have some controversy about the writers of this book, yet Paraśurāma is considered as a writer of this book. This book is not only based on Śrī Vidyā but also a pillar of entire process of meditation suggested by tantras. Dattātreya, the son of sage Atri took the second place in the tradition of the Gurus according to the Āgamaśāstra. According to the Tripurārashasya, Paraśurāma went to Dattātreya for his

7. uddharedātmanātmānam nātmānamavasaḍyeyat /
   ātmaiva hyātmano bandhurātmaiva ripurātmanah //
   bandhurātmānastasya yenātmaivātmanā jitaḥ /
   anātmanastu śatrutve vartetātmaiva satrunat //

Śrimadbhagavadgītā, Dhyānayoga, 5 and 6.
mental peace, because he was wondered to find the prowess of Rāma and also got remorse for being defeated by Rāma. Dattātrey told him to worship Tripurā for twelve years. It is said that the *Paraśurāmakalpa-sūtram* is the source of *Dattātreyasamhitā*. In the *Dattātreyasamhitā* there are eighteen hundred ślokas where worship of Śrīvidyā is found. Though Paraśurāma was related to all these books viz. *Dattātreyasamhitā*, *Tripurāhasyaṃ*, etc. yet it can be said that in the Paraśurāma legend there have some philosophical implications also.