Chapter V – Religious Processes, Rituals and Pilgrimage in Gujarat

In the previous four chapters, archaeological and sculptural data pertaining to religion in Gujarat were discussed. In this chapter, the concentration will be on the data available from the Mahābhārata and the Skanda Pūrāṇa pertaining to sacred sites in Gujarat and religious developments in the region. A study of these texts becomes imperative to have a better understanding of religious developments and a more comprehensive picture of the region. Replete with stories and legends the Pūrāṇas also furnish data regarding the religious beliefs and practices of a region even though this requires a cautious sifting of facts from legends and myths. The aid of archaeological and inscripotional data will be taken to determine the degree to which certain rituals and festivals were practiced and the presence of sites mentioned in the texts.

Historians like Vijay Nath and Kunal Chakrabarti have suggested that the currently practiced religion be called Pūrānic religion since it is the eighteen Mahā Pūrāṇas that are considered as the sacred texts. The Pūrāṇas have been studied not with a view to highlight the diversity and continuity in the religious beliefs, but have been viewed as instruments used by the Brahmanical community to spread the Pūrānic religion. The Pūrāṇas are viewed as an indicator of a process whereby the brahmanas spread their religion by interacting with tribal and other communities, and the process is seen as two directional. But if we take a look at the Pūrāṇas it is noticed that no one great tradition seems to exist. As pointed out by Vijay Nath, “This gigantic corpus reveals not one homogenetic, but several categories of Pūrānic texts, varying in their content
and format.¹ According to her the cause behind the compilation of the *Purāṇas* was the extension of the Brahmanical culture to the ‘peripheral’ areas due to the land granted to this priestly class. She states that the nature of focal attention, which was paid to these tribes in the *Purāṇas*, seems unprecedented and excessive and is almost refrain like in character. The interaction between the tribes and civilizational centres in her opinion could have been occasioned by a certain amount of economic interdependence, which was unavoidable. Also, trade routes brought civilizational forces into close proximity with the tribal habitational zone. Interaction was also necessitated by the need to exploit the professional services of the tribesmen. According to Nath, in the closing centuries of the Christian era the politico/economic scenario underwent a considerable change.² Two factors were important that necessitated the urgent need for acculturation. First was the appearance of foreign powers, which uprooted certain rulers, who had to try their luck in remoter territories inhabited by the tribes. The second factor was the development of trade and commerce, and to meet the demand for Indian goods agricultural production had to be promoted. The increasing pressure on land led to the need to reclaim virgin and wasteland, and this was possible through granting of land to the brahmanas. A labour force was required for the cultivation of these plots of land and this could be provided by the tribes already dwelling in and around the area of the cultivated land. Also, there were brahmanas who cultivated plots of land by themselves and they too, according to Nath, could not have avoided contact with the native tribes. Most of the lands granted were not of a very large size and there was more of intensive agriculture. Nath points out that the rise of such a fairly large number of brahmana cultivators led to an attitudinal change on part of the brahmana ideologues. The

²Ibid., p.27
agricultural leanings led to the agro-technology and other related subjects being displayed by Brahmanical writers in the post Gupta period. Along with the economic factor was the political force caused by state formation. The ruling elite and the priestly groups played a crucial role. In this phase, it was the ruling aboriginal chiefs and their priests who provided the initiative for acculturation since they were keen to enter the cultural mainstream. She lays stress on the role played by the tribal chieftains who staked their claim to political power and turned collaborators with the migrant brahmanas. The process of acculturation was peaceful and through religious indoctrination.

Vijay Nath’s formulation of the spread of Brahmanism because of land grants that made the brahmanas settle in remote areas, which led to an interaction with the tribals and also the spread of better agricultural techniques needs further scrutiny. In the Skanda Purāṇa we come across Prabhasa Khaṇḍa, and also the importance of Dwarka. The archaeological data shows that these two sites had great antiquity and were important even before the period of the compilation of the Purāṇas. Now, if we give credit to the brahmanas for the spread of the Puranic religion and subsequently the construction of temples, then how does one explain the earlier presence of temples at Dwarka and Padri? Further it is interesting to see that the two sites of this region that have a considerable amount of importance in the Purāṇas are those very sites that have been inhabited over a long period of time. Also if it was agriculture that led to assimilation then these two sites negate this. This is mainly because these two sites seemed to have subsisted more on trade than agriculture due to their location along the coast. It would seem as though, rather than creating new centres of pilgrimage or

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3 Ibid., p.30
4 Ibid., p.34

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temples, the brahmanas with the aid of the Purāṇas recognized and accepted the importance of certain sites as evident from the example of Dwarka.

Temples are associated with the emergence of Pauranic religion and the general belief is that the rulers invited these brahmanas in order to help legitimize their rule and also to gradually increase the area under cultivation. This they tried to achieve by granting land on a large scale to them. It is then these brahmanas who spread the religion in the hinterland areas and it is the ruling and the religious elite who are credited with the construction of the first temples in these regions.

If the political elite had a major role to play in the process of acculturation then it becomes difficult to explain the lack of importance given to politically important sites, in the Purāṇas. The sites of Amreli, Junagadh and Valabhi that were political centres do not acquire the same importance as the non-political sites of Dwarka and Somanatha.

As for the construction of a temple by the royalty, the earliest reference is available from the site of Junagadh on the rock edict dating to the Gupta period.5 Thereafter reference to temple construction by a member of the royalty is found in the plates of the time of Toramana found at Sanjeli that date to the end of the 5th century AD or the beginning of the 6th century AD.6 These are a total of three copper plate grants that mention donations to the same temple in different years. The grant dating to the third regnal year mentions the donation to the temple of her deity Jayasvami caused to be constructed by the queen mother Viradhikya.7 The grant belonging to the sixth regnal year records the grant of villages in the name of mother Viradhikya the queen mother

5 CII- Inscriptions of the Early Guptas- Vol.III, 1888; p. 61-65
6 R.N.Mehta & A.M.Thakkar, M.S.University Copper Plates of the Time of Toramana, MSU Vadodara, 1978; p.1
7 N.Mehta & A.M.Thakkar, M.S.University Copper Plates of the Time of Toramana, MSU Vadodara, 1978; p.17
to the temple of the Supreme deity constructed by her. The third grant records the grant of the village Sangampallika to the temple of Lord Narayana, which was constructed by Viradhikeya who is now described as the queen paternal grandmother.

References to donations made to temples by the Maitraka rulers are very few since out of a total of four donations, two donations are towards temples dedicated to the goddess, and one each to that of Siva and Surya. While Dronasimha and Dhruvasena II made one donation each, Siladitya I donated twice to temples. Donation was also made to the temple of goddess Kottammabika in Trisangamaka, which received a donation of guḍa and rūpaka. The temple of Adityadeva, dedicated to Surya, was located in Bhadariniyaka and was donated 100 pādāvarta of land and two bhaiksaka by the ruler Siladitya.

In most cases, these temple structures have not been identified on ground, except in the case of the temple dedicated to Siva which was located in Vatapadra. Evidence for the involvement of the community is provided in one of the Maitraka inscriptions as well. There is a reference in the inscriptions to the presence of a temple dedicated to Bhavāni which was built by the villagers. One of the fields donated by Dharasena III in the Bhavnagar plates lay to the west of (the temple of) Sanikarika... (i.e. the goddess Bhavāni) built by the villagers. The temple built by Harinatha, as recorded in the inscription, was dedicated to Siva and received 270 pādāvartas of land and a step well is further evidence of the construction of temples more by the people and communities than by the royalty. The temple was known as Mahādeva and was

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8 N.Mehta & A.M.Thakkar, *M.S.University Copper Plates of the Time of Toramana*, MSU Vadodara, 1978; p. 18
9 N.Mehta & A.M.Thakkar, *M.S.University Copper Plates of the Time of Toramana*, MSU Vadodara, 1978; p. 19
10 *E.I.*, Vol XVI; p.18
11 *JBBRAS.*, Vol. XX; p.88
13 *E.I.*, Vol.XXI; p.117
14 *I.A.*, Vol.IX; p.237
15 *E.I.*, Vol. XXI; p.182
located in Batabatara. In Vala itself at Moti Darai an old Siva temple with a step well was discovered, and not long ago a polished granite linga of greenish colour was discovered there, but no reference to this temple is to be found in the inscriptions.

Similarly the temples located along the coast of Saurashtra dated between the 6th and the 8th century AD have been given the nomenclature of 'Maitraka Temples' but do not contain any evidence to suggest the involvement of the royalty in either their construction or maintenance. Thus, most temples mentioned in the grants cannot be located on ground, and the temples that do exist did not have any association with the royalty.

Rather than attributing the construction of temples to the ruling elite and the prevalent religious ideology to a new class of settlers in the region it is more important to consider the existing religious beliefs and practices among the inhabitants. The emergence of temples in this region could have been a further manifestation of the already prevalent religious system in the period prior to their construction. By attributing religious developments to settlers from other places would mean the worship of those deities that were brought into the region by the brahmanas. The impression one would then have is a replacement of the religious practices of the people inhabiting the region by a new set of beliefs and practices. The various figurines and the miniature Siva lingas would seem to present a different view. The worship of Siva can now be traced to a much earlier period in this region and hence the beginnings of the worship of Siva cannot be attributed to or connected with the land grants and the associated spread of the 'Brahmanical' religion. The terracotta figurines found at different sites, such as those of Laljāgaurī, Paṅcāgnitapās Parvati and Mahisasuramardini, would seem to indicate the prevalence of some form of

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16 I.A., Vol.IX; p.237
17 K.J. Virji, Ancient History of Saurashtra, Konkan Institute of Arts and Sciences, Bombay, 1952; p.167
goddess worship and this too antedates the period of the land grants to the brahmanas in this region. In the region of Gujarat evidence for the role of the ruling elite is wanting, and most of the grants made by the rulers are to brahmanas involved in Vedic studies.

The process of appropriating and glorifying sacred sites was selective when it comes to Gujarat. It is noticed in the Skanda Purāṇa that even though numerous temple sites were emerging along the coast of Saurashtra, the only sites that have been dealt with in great detail are those of Somanatha and Dwarka. These two sites were already tīrthas in the time of the Mahābhārata and thus to associate the Purāṇas with settling of Brahmanas in newer unsettled areas to spread the religion seems implausible in this case. What does change in the Skanda Purāṇa as compared to Mahābhārata in respect to these two sites is that there is an extension of sacred geography. Now it is not only Prabhasa Patan with the Somanatha temple, but Prabhasa Kṣetra, which includes the area around Somanatha as well.

A study carried by Kunal Chakrabarti makes it apparent that religious processes need to be viewed more in terms of interaction between the brahmanical and local religious ideas rather than the domination of one. As has been pointed out by him, “The Puranic process involved the repeated assertion of the Vedic authority on one hand and strong affirmation of local popular customs on the other.”18 A careful analysis of the Purāṇas reveals an admixture of the Vedic and locale beliefs and practices. The mantras prescribed for certain rites and rituals may have been Vedic but were turned round to suit the needs of the local beliefs and worship rituals.

An attempt shall be carried out to define the religious processes in the region even though clearly defining such processes is complex and not without its problems. The

18 Kunal Chakrabarti, Religious Process- The Purāṇas and the Making of a Regional Tradition, OUP, Delhi. 2001; p.32
multiple religious processes occurring in Gujarat shall also be brought forth. It is noticed that the relation between temples or brahmans and the ruling authority is not applicable in the region. Thus it becomes imperative to identify other processes and religious changes taking place in the region and for this I shall concentrate mainly on the *Skanda Purāṇa*. The chapter shall demonstrate that while on the one hand Vedic studies continue, on the other local popular customs and beliefs were also finding their place in the *Skanda Purāṇa*. Simultaneously a number of festivals mentioned in the text hint at an attempt to involve a greater number of people. Rather than the ruling dynasty being the main support in Gujarat for the brahmans, in the spread of the Puranic religion, the region demonstrates an interaction and dialogue between the local beliefs and customs and the Brahmanical ideology.

In the study to follow in this chapter it will be noticed that while certain rites and rituals continue from an earlier period, such as the Vedic ceremonies, one also notices a mixture of the old and the new as in the case of *śrāddha* where the rite may have its roots in the local beliefs but the mantras used were in Sanskrit. Simultaneously new inputs are noticed, as seen in the increase in importance and number of wells, as well as the incorporation of rituals that are specific to a site and may date earlier to the compilation of the *Skanda Purāṇa*. First the chapter shall demonstrate continuity, then proceed to discuss methods which ensured the involvement of more people in Puranic rituals, the incorporation of local beliefs being one, the evidence pertaining to new inputs and then demonstrate with the aid of archaeological and inscriptive data that the sites of Dwarka and Somanatha which were already sacred were being further elaborated in the *Skanda Purāṇa*. 
Continuity of Vedic Rituals

There has been a general belief that with the coming of the Purāṇas the Vedic rituals were replaced by rites mentioned in the Purāṇas. According to Savitri V. Kumar, “The social religion of the Purāṇas was different from the more or less personal religion as seen from the Śrautasūtra tradition and from the earlier Brahmanic tradition. The Śrauta religion was a development of the individual ritual series, while the Purāṇas have a wider humane approach”,19 and that the Purāṇas in most cases portrays the common person’s religious belief.20 A similar opinion is held by Vijay Nath as according to her, “The development (of tīrthas) marked the culmination of the process by which the Vedic tradition with its narrow caste base and appeal was sought to be gradually subsumed by the Puranic tradition with its strong folk orientation and being geared largely to the appeal of the masses.”21 The change is seen in the fact that tīrthas came to occupy a very important place, and that visiting certain tīrthas gave as much merit or reward as in the performance of the Rājasūya and Vājapeya ceremonies. “In the Mahābhārata we find that various tīrthas have been associated with the fruits or merits of various sacrifices.”22 In the opinion of Vijay Nath, “The ritual act of pilgrimage became both a substitute for Vedic yajñas and an important expiatory measure.”23 This chapter will demonstrate that tīrthas do not mark the culmination of the bhakti movement, rather it was a continuation of an earlier tradition that gained more importance and also did not replace the religion of performance of sacrifices.

19 Savitri V Kumar, The Purānic Lore of Holy Water Places, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, Delhi, 1983; p.240
20 Ibid.; p.245
21 Vijay Nath, Purāṇas and Acculturation- A Historic Anthropological Perspective, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, Delhi, 2001; p.130
22 N.B.Patil, The Folklore in the Mahābhārata, Ajanta Books, Delhi, 1983; p.25
23 Vijay Nath, Purāṇas and Acculturation, - A Historic Anthropological Perspective, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, Delhi, 2001; p.126
It shall be noticed in the course of this chapter that even though new rituals associated with tīrthas and temple worship came up, yet the sacrificial rites continued to take place. In the Mahābhārata itself references are found both to tīrthas as well as sacrifices. Reference to the existence of temples comes from the statement, ‘Bulls belonging to the village temple’ (III.X.24), while the statement, ‘and on Parvan days, he should cause worship of fire to be made with offerings, oblations in fire and recital of benedictions.’ (IV. III.78.5) indicates the prevalence of sacrifices as well. Thus, it would not be appropriate to think in terms of a disjunction between the Puranic and sacrificial religion, rather they existed side by side, in the period under study. While tīrthas and temple related rituals may have appealed to the masses, sacrifices continued to be performed by those better off. This becomes evident when analysing the data available to us from inscriptions dating to the Maitraka period. The grants are evidence of the diverse beliefs of the Maitraka rulers. While the rulers claim to be mostly Saivites, donations were bestowed to brahmanas involved in Vedic studies, to temples and Buddhist monasteries as well. The rulers of this dynasty made four donations towards temples, as well as gave fifty six donations to brahmanas specializing in one or the other branch of Vedic studies. These donations were made at times with the purpose of the continuance of certain sacrifices, as evident from the grant of Dharasena II,24 Siladitya I,25 Dhruvasena I,26 and Siladitya V,27 and were known as bali, caru, vaisvadeva and agnihotra.

Even though the rulers claimed to be devout worshippers of some deity, most of these grants were given to brahmanas who do not seem to have been involved with temples. The gotra and the Vedic branch of studies of these brahmanas suggest that they were

24 I.A., Vol.VII; p.71
25 I.A., Vol.IX; p.237
26 E.I., Vol.XV; p.256
27 I.A., Vol.VI; p.17
involved either in Vedic studies or in the performance of sacrifices. The majority of them belong to the *Chândogya* or the *Vájisaneyi* branch of Vedic studies. In some grants it has been mentioned that the purpose of the donation was for the maintenance of rites such as *bali*, *caru* and *vaîsvadeva*. In one grant of Dhruvasena III dated AD 653-54, it is stated that “be it known to you, that, for the increase of spiritual merit of my mother and father I give with a libation of water to brahmana Bhattibhatta....”

The maximum donations were made to brahmanas belonging to either the *Chândogya* or *Vájisaneyi* branch of Vedic studies. Also, if we take a look at the list of brahmanas who received more than one donation, those belonging to these two schools and the *Maitrāyanīya* School were the ones who received them. In only one case is the donation shared between two people who are brothers and belonged to the *Chândogya* School. Thus it were the brahmanas belonging to either one of three branches of Vedic studies who were most patronized. Besides *Chândogya* and *Vájisaneyi* the *Bhavṛcha* branch of brahmanas received the maximum single grants and they total to ten.

At this point of time Vedic studies seemed to have reached a high stage of specialization. This becomes clear when the list regarding the brahmana donees is looked at. Within the Vedic branch of *Vájisaneyi* there is a further division into *Śukla Yajurveda* and *Caturvedin*. Also mentioned is a *Madhyāndin Vájisaneyi* branch of Vedic studies. Then there is the *Maitrāyanīya*, as well as *Maitrāyanīya Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda* and *Maitrāyanīya Māṇavaka*. It appears as though on the one hand the Maitraka rulers associated themselves with a particular deity, such as Siva and on the other hand took an interest in Vedic religion. They seemed to have had a great interest in the continuation of various ritual sacrifices as *bali*, *caru* and *vaîsvadeva* and

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28 *EI*. Vol. I; p.92
ceremonies, in all probabilities for the continuation of the reign as well as success in campaigns. Also, we have one example of a donation being made for the spiritual merit of the parents by Dhruvasena III. Probably a part of the donations given by other rulers was utilized for this purpose also.

While rulers did donate for the continuance of sacrifices, they also associated themselves with one of the Puranic deities, mainly Siva. The grant of Dhruvasena I mentions the purpose of the grant as the maintenance of sacrificial rites of bali, caru, vaiśvadeva and others.29 The Bantia plates of Dharasena II mention that the grant is made for the maintenance of the five sacrificial rites.30 Dharasena II granted land to a Brahmin so that bali, caru, vaiśvadeva, agnihotra and atithi pañca mahāyajñā could be performed.31 The purpose of the grant of Siladitya V was to defray the expenses of an agnihotra and other sacrifices.32 The grant of Dharasena II to a Rgvedi brahmana to perform sacrifices33 indicates that it was those involved or specializing in Vedic studies who were performing the sacrifices. Thus these grants demonstrate that even though Puranic rituals were taking root in the form of temple worship and tirthas in Saurashtra, it did not mean that sacrifices went into oblivion or were completely undermined by the new rituals associated with the Purāṇas.

It is noticed that the most frequently mentioned sacrifices are those of bali, caru and vaiśvadeva, and the other important one mentioned is agnihotra. Vaiśvadeva is performed on Caitra full moon and is one of the Cāturāmāśyas (seasonal sacrifices).34 In the vaiśvadeva parvan itself there are (besides the five offerings common to all Cāturāmāśyas) three more offerings viz. a cake on seven potsherds for the Maruts, a

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29 E.I., Vol.XV; p.258  
30 E.I., Vol. XXI; p.179  
31 E.I., Vol.XXXVII; p.171  
32 I.A., Vol.VII; p.17  
34 As quoted in P.V.Kane, History of Dharmasāstra, Vol.II, Part II, Bhandarkar Oriental Institute, Poona, 1974; p.1091
payasya to the All-Gods and a cake on a single potsherd to Heaven and Earth. The five offerings common to all Cāturamāsyas are a purodasa (cake) on eight potsherds for Agni, boiled rice (caru) for Soma, a purodasa on 12 or 8 potsherds for Savitr, a caru for Sarasvati, a caru of finely ground rice for Puṣan. The reward for the performance of Cāturamāsyas was heaven, and they could be performed throughout ones life or for one year only. The name given to this rite is vaiśvadeva since in it sacrifice is offered to all gods or because food is cooked in it for all the gods.

Out of the seven forms of haviryajnas, agnihotra is the second according to Gautama VIII.20. From the evening of the day of agnyādheya the house-holder has to perform agnihotra (burnt offering of cow’s milk) twice daily in the evening and the morning to the end of his life. The homa is performed with cow’s milk without any particular reward in view, but one who desires to secure a village or plenty of food, or strength or brilliance may employ respectively yavāgu (gruel), cooked rice, curds or clarified butter (Asv. II.3.1-2).

Even though we find references to sacrifices for personal benefit, yet donations to those specialising in one or the other branch of Vedic study is perhaps an indication of other important sacrifices that might have been carried out by them. Those mentioned are Vājisaneyi, Chāndogya, Atharvana, Bhavṛcha and Maitrāyaniyā. The brahmanas specialising in Chāndogya would have had their roots in the Sāmaveda, the Maitrāyaniyās and Vājisaneysis in the Yajurveda, Atharvana in Atharvaveda and the Bhavṛcha was an offshoot of the Rgveda. Maurice Winternitz points out that four chief priests occupied the śrauta sacrifices and they were: 1. Hotr or “Caller:Invoker”

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35 Ibid.; p. 1092-93
36 Ibid.; p. 1092
37 Ibid.; p. 741
38 Ibid.; p. 998
39 Ibid.; p. 1001
40 Paul Deussen. The Philosophy of the Upanishads, Mushiram Manoharlal Publishers, Delhi, 1979; p.6,7
who recited the verses of the hymns in order to praise the gods and invite them to the sacrifice; 2. The Udgaṭr or “singer” who accompanied with songs the preparations and performance of the sacrifices, especially for the soma libations; 3. The Adhvaryu or “sacrifice- executor” who executed all sacrificial acts and mutters thereby the prose prayers and sacrificial formulas, and 4. The Brahmana or “Highpriest” who had to protect the sacrifice from harm.\(^{41}\) The Hotṛ was one who was learned in the Rgveda, the Udgaṭpriests learned in the schools of the Sāmaveda,\(^{42}\) the Adhvaryu priest the Yajurveda\(^{43}\) and a Brahman was he who knew all the three Vedas.\(^{44}\) The Vājīsaneyi Samhita belongs to “white” Yajurveda, containing only mantras,\(^{45}\) and it originates from Yajñavālkya Vājīsaneyi, who was the principal teacher of this Veda.\(^{46}\) In this Samhita there are prayers for; new and full moon sacrifices, with their connected sacrifices for the manes, the daily fire cult, inception of fire and fire offerings (agnihotra) to be made every morning and evening and seasonal sacrifices (Cāturamāsyas) that were performed once every four months. The Soma sacrifice could last from one to many days, the Vājapeya was a one day sacrifice and the Rājasūya was a sacrifice that took place at a kings coronation,\(^{47}\) and also mentioned is the horse sacrifice (Aśvamedha).\(^{48}\)

A look at the Yajñavālkya Samhita, along with the data on the various functions of the priests, in a sacrifice, and those mentioned in the inscription, it could be inferred that some sacrifices must have taken place. It is seen that the Maitraka rulers donate mostly to brahmanas specialising in one of the three branches of Vedic study. Thus, it

\(^{42}\) Ibid.; p.149
\(^{43}\) Ibid.; p.150
\(^{44}\) Ibid.; p.149
\(^{45}\) Ibid.; p.159
\(^{46}\) Ibid.; p.158
\(^{47}\) Ibid.; p.160
\(^{48}\) Ibid.; p.161
can be assumed that in return for the donations they received they performed various sacrifices in which each had a role of its own to play, such as the Vājapeya or Rājasūya sacrifice.

A description of these rituals, two among many others that are mentioned, demonstrates that certain rituals and sacrifices continued from the earlier times. It is possible that those who could have afforded them were still performing rites and sacrifices since they could have invested the vast resources required in carrying them out. At the same time other forms of worship and rites started gaining ground and popularity. This could have been because these tīrthas and temples, along with their rituals and stories that made them famous, were an easy and affordable means to attain salvation and fulfillment of desires for the not so wealthy.

**Elaboration of Rituals in the Skanda Purāṇa as Compared to the Mahābhārata**

An analysis of rituals mentioned in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Skanda Purāṇa* makes it evident that certain rituals mentioned in the former are described in much greater detail in the *Purāṇa*. Thus while rites and rituals associated with certain sites continue from the earlier period they also become more elaborate and complex. Some of these rituals invariably imply the requirement of the brahmanas as they are complex and complicated. The elaborate description, various items to be given and the stress laid on dāna ritual indicates importance of the priestly community in the region. The local inhabitants would have played the main role in providing the economic support since the support of the royalty was mainly towards those involved in Vedic studies and ritual specialization thereof.

The *Skanda Purāṇa* in its Prabhasa Khaṇḍa also lays down elaborate rules while undertaking a pilgrimage (Sk.P. VII.1.28), something that is not found in the *Mahābhārata*. The pilgrimage or yātrā is to be undertaken when the person feels
inclined and has the requisite money on hand and the devotee should observe some (religious) rules and regulations in his own house (Sk.P.VII.I.28.3-4). The person should bow to Rudra mentally and perform śrāddha in accordance with the injunctions. He should circumambulate the holy spot observing the vow of silence with great concentration (Sk.P.VII.I.28.5). Among other things the devotee should be self restrained, observe full control on diet, should be rid of lust, anger, covetousness and delusion. He should be free from rivalry, malice and indulgence and thereafter he can start his religious journey (Sk.P.VII.I.28.6-7). Pilgrimage on foot is considered the best (Sk.P.VII.I.28.22) and by controlling the sense organs and subsisting on alms the benefit acquired is ten times (Sk.P.VII.I.28.24). In addition to this no gifts are to be accepted at the tīrtha (Sk.P.VII.I.28.34) and in the tīrtha the requisite fast should be observed (Sk.P.VII.I.28.61) as there is nothing superior to fast observed in a holy spot as a means of quelling sin(Sk.P.VII.I.28.64). One should also give Mahādāna, (Sk.P.VII.I.28.102) and carry out Sparśana or touching or ritualistic imbibing of the tīrtha water (Sk.P.VII.I.28.122).

Another such ritual described in great detail is that of dāna and as pointed out “The Pauranic legends deal elaborately with the aspect of dāna, its allied rites and their positive as well as negative aspects. Dāna according to ones capacity is necessary almost at every tīrtha.” A look at the Skanda Purāṇa demonstrates that the above mentioned statement holds true as dāna becomes an important aspect of the ritual at tīrthas and is described in detail. Even though in the Mahābhārata it finds mention, for instance ‘That magnanimous king, bathing there, offered oblations to the pitṛs and the celestials. Giving wealth to the foremost of brahmanas he then went to the ocean’ (Mbh. III. CXVIII.3), or ‘The king observed many fasts in these tīrthas and gave away


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many costly gems’ (Mbh. Ill, CXVIII.14), it is not dealt with in great detail. On the other hand, it is given a lot of importance in the Skanda Purāṇa where not only the types of dāna, but also different objects to be donated at different tīrthas are also mentioned.

The text mentions the sixteen Mahādānas that should be made by a king at Prabhasa. These are Tūlapuruṣa, Brahmāṇḍa, Prthvi, Kalpa tree, Kāmadhenu, Gaja (elephant), Vāji (horse), Ratha (chariot), Ratna (jewel), Dhenu (cow), Hiraṇya (gold), Aśva (horse), Sapta Sāgara (seven seas), Mahābhūta (great elements), Ghaṭa (pot), Viśva (universe), Cakra (wheel) and Kalpalatā (wish yielding creeper).

The following ten are remembered as Parvatas (mountains): Dhānya (grain), Ratna (jewel), Guḍa (jaggery), Suvarṇa (gold), Tila (gingelly seeds), Kārpasa (cotton), Sarkara (sugar), Sarpis (ghee), Lāvana (salt) and Rupya (silver).

The following ten are remembered as Dhenus (cows): Guḍa (jaggery), Ajya (ghee), Dadhi (curds), Madhu (honey), Ambu (water), Salila (water), Kṣīra (milk), Sarkara (sugar) and those called Ratna in their own form. Of these gifts to be given at each tīrtha separately or all should be given once in a place at the confluence of Sarasvati and the sea (Sk.P.VII.I.28. 90-94).

To a learned man everything should be given or a house with all the necessary paraphernalia; something whether much or little should be given to brhamanas in a social gathering, (Sk.P.VII.I.28.95) and in an injunction laid down dāna together with monetary gifts and gift of cows should be performed (Sk.P.VII.I.28.97). At the site of Bhalla tīrtha where Kṛṣṇa was killed by an arrow, one should worship Viśnu and keep awake at night and make gifts like those of lamps etc. (Sk.P.VII.i.353.10b-11).

The Skanda Purāṇa provides a description of the various reasons or bases of dāna which total six. These are Dharma, Artha (wealth), Kāma (desire), Vṛdā (shame),
Harśa (delight) and Bhaya (fear) (Sk.P. I.ii.4.55). The six ancillaries of dāna are the donor, the recipient, purity, the thing gifted, the thing associated with Dharma and the place and time. The text also prescribes that a donor should be free from sickness, he should be a righteous soul, be desirous of giving, be free from desires and pure in conduct and his vocation as well as activities should be free from reproach (Sk.P. I.ii.4.62-64a). Dāna is further sub divided into three categories- Uttama (best), Madhyama (mediocre) and Kāniyasa (inferior) (Sk.P. I.ii.4.77) on the basis of the objects donated. For instance while houses, palaces, land, well and a cow are Uttama, (Sk.P. I.ii.4.78) food grains, resting places and garments are considered Madhyama (Sk.P. I.ii.4.79).

The objects to be donated during the Cāturamāsa consist mainly of food items, which stands in contrast to objects donated otherwise such as cows, land, gold etc. Donation in this period when Hari is asleep becomes a means of attaining brahmana hood (Sk.P.Vi.235.1). Gifting of cooked food excels all other gifts (Sk.P.VI.235.4) and items such as ghee in pots in combination with diamond (Sk.P.VI.235.9), cooked food (Sk.P.VI.235.13-14), milk, curds and buttermilk, (Sk.P.VI.235.15), vegetables and garments (Sk.P.VI.235.16), flowers and garments (Sk.P.VI.235.17), sandal paste, incense (Sk.P.VI.235.18), cows and plots of land , which causes redemption (Sk.P.VI.235.20), gingelly seeds, cooked food sprinkled with honey or jaggery, salt, oil etc. (Sk.P.VI.235.21).

Instances prescribing gift of particular items at different sites is also seen. It is advised that at Brahma kuṇḍa in Prabhasa Kṣetra a pilgrim should make a gift of horses and golden water pitchers to a learned brahmana for the eradication of all sins (Sk.P.VII.1.147.10).
At the site of Rukmini kuṇḍa, located at Girnar-Junagadh, for the propitiation of Rukmini and Śrīpati, charitable gifts according to ones capacity are prescribed (Sk.P.II.viii.7.26). A man should perform holy bath, homa with Vaishnava mantras, charitable gift and worship of brahmanas and Visnu at the site (Sk.P.II.viii.7.22). At Camatkarapura the donation of a cow to an excellent brahmana helps attain the benefit of the gift of the entire earth (Sk.P.VI.15.9-15). Gift of cows and clothes to prominent brahmanas as per procedure at Bhalla tīrtha, located in Prabhasa Patan, secures the donee the fruit of (proper performance of) the yātra (Sk.P.VII.I.353.33). To ensure that no future generation shall be afflicted by leprosy the devotee should make the gift of a cow with the deity in view (Sk.P.VI.212.75).

Another ritual dealt with in great detail and advised to be performed at Dwarka and Somanatha is that of śrāddha. In the case of Dwarka it is mentioned that, ‘On the meritorious twelfth day of the bright half of in the month of Bhadrapad, one should cause the offering of oblations etc (to the pitṛs) on that sacred place Dvārāvatī which is resorted to by sages and Gandharvas. One (thereby) obtains unending merit offered by pitṛs.’ (Sk.P.III.ii.25.11-16) Further, ‘After taking bath here if the devotee offers water libations and balls of rice and performs śrāddha here, his manes become pleased with him.’ (Sk.P. III.26.1-3) By performing śrāddha at the site of Bhallaka tīrtha in Prabhasa the pitṛs attain satisfaction (Sk.P.VII.I.353.25) and at Kardamala, also in the Prabhasa Kṣetra, propitiating the pitṛs make the pitṛs satisfied for a kalpa and performing śrāddha here with greens, roots and fruits here is as good as performing śrāddha in all the tīrthas.(Sk.P.VII.I.354. 6-7)

Similarly in the case of Somanatha, known as Prabhasa Patan as well in the Purāṇa, an entire chapter is devoted in the Prabhasa Khaṇḍa on the topic of śrāddha and how

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it should be performed. References to the benefits of performing śrāddha here include, “One who performs śrāddha at Somesvara without feeling of jealousy, his ancestors, the departed ones, become deeply satisfied until the annihilation of all living beings” (Sk.P. V.iii.85.70b-78).

Another ritual encountered often in the text is that of pīnga dāna or the offering oblations to one’s ancestors which is to be carried out by the devotee at various sacred sites. A holy bath and offering of libations to the pītrs at Brahma kunda located in the Prabhāsa Kṣetra helps attain all the benefit of Agniṣṭoma (Sk.P. VII.I.147.9-10). Similarly at Mulasthana the pilgrim should offer libations with water mixed with gingelly seeds, and if śrāddha is performed at the site with even greens, roots and fruits the pītrs attain salvation (Sk.P. VII.I.278.70-72). If a man offers libations on the full moon day of Śrāvaṇa then all the eighteen types of leprosy will disappear (Sk.P.VII.I.278.74-75). A bath in the river Puskaravartaka and offering of libation to the pītrs here with devotion helps attain what is desired and the merit befitting Tripuskara (Sk.P. VII.I.134.11-13).

The topic is dealt with in great detail in the Skanda Purāṇa as a chapter is devoted to the necessity of performing śrāddha (Sk.P.VI.215), one is devoted to its origin (Sk.P.VI.216), the proper time for its performance, the eligible brahmana and procedure of carrying it out (SkP.Vi. 217).

On the day of the śrāddha the Yajaman is not to recite the Vedic mantras, he shall avoid anger and despised activities, oil bath, physical fatigue, journey and going far in vehicles (Sk.P.VI.217.40). In the hour named kutapa when the sun reaches the middle of the sky the person takes his holy bath and wears white clothes. He should propitiate the pītrs and devas as well as the invited brahmanas and then he performs śrāddha (Sk.P.VI.217.41). The periods and occasions in which when śrāddha is offered
becomes everlasting is enumerated in the text and these are Mānvadi tithis which are the lunar days marking the beginning or anniversaries of Mānvārtaras (Sk.P.VI.217.52). If a devotee takes bath and offers water mixed with darbha and gingelly seeds with the pitṛs in view on the days detailed in the text, he attains the greatest goal (Sk.P.VI.217.54-58). Rules relating to performance of śrāddha according to ones own land and caste are also laid down (Sk.P.VI.218). Different days according to ones desired aims are also detailed in the text. For instance those who wish for covetable sons of good conduct should perform śrāddha on Pañcamī or the fifth day (Sk.P.VI.219.6). For perfect agricultural produce it should be performed on the Saptami or seventh day, for success in mercantile activities and business dealings Aṣṭami or eight day is suggested, performance on twelfth day helps obtain perfect sons, and it is advised that on the thirteenth day it should not be performed as it is not conducive to the increase of progeny (Sk.P.VI.219.3-15).

The text also gives a list of various flowers to be used in a śrāddha rite along with other things such as pepper, jaggery salt and tin (Sk.P.VII.I.206.47-48). Śrāddha is not to be performed during adversity, without fire, during solar and lunar eclipse, in a group or when the sun has set (Sk.P.VII.I.206.50). Annual śrāddha is to be performed every year on days of death of the mother and father but not in the intercalary month (Sk.P.VII.I.206.59).

The elaboration of these rituals entailed the requirement of a ritual specialist. The day, time and method of performing these are dealt in such detail that they seem to hint at an attempt at establishing certain rituals that aided in the continued importance of the ritual specialist. The Purāṇas were compiled in Sanskrit and the only ones with access to it and in depth knowledge were the priestly community who had authority over these elaborate rites. Simultaneously a process aimed at involving more people in the
Puranic rituals was also taking place. This is evident from some festivals described in the *Śkanda Purāṇa* that shall now be described.

**Festivals Involving Pilgrims on a Larger Scale**

In addition to the continuity of Vedic rites and rituals, the *Purāṇas* inform us of certain festivals and occasions that would have implied the involvement of a greater number of people. Besides the daily worship of the deity carried out at the temple, visiting the temples on certain festivals and occasions accrued more benefits to the pilgrim. These occasions provided the opportunity to the common man to hear recitations of various stories and legends in the *Purāṇas*. As has been pointed out by Kunal Chakrabarti, "The *Purāṇas* were written in Sanskrit but purveyed in vernacular for popular consumption."\(^{51}\)

A festival mentioned in the *Śiva* and the *Skanda Purāṇa* and celebrated to date with great fervour in many parts of the country and associated with Siva is the festival of *Śivarātri*. The *Śiva Purāṇa* mentions that in the dark half of the month of Māgha, the rite of *Śivarātri* is performed when the *Caturdaśi* extends up to midnight (III, 38, 24). The devotee shall go to the temple of Siva for worship and he shall observe ritualistic affirmation (III, 38,27). The night is divided into three periods and in the fourth three hour period the devotee is to worship Siva with black gram, green gram and offer flowers of *sankhi* and the leaves of bilva (III, 38, 69-70). Till day break, the devotee shall pass time in songs of prayer, musical instruments and devotional dances (III, 38, 74). The *Skanda Purāṇa* contains the story of Canda who performs the worship of the *linga* incidentally on the *Śivarātri* night, and the leaves he plucked of the bilva tree he sat on fell on the *linga* as well. He also kept awake and fasted, and by so fasting and keeping vigil on *Śivarātri* night he attained the greatest region (Sk.P. I.i.33.52-61).

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This festival is celebrated to day in many parts of the country when devotees fast and throng to temples and offer bilva leaves, oblations and pour milk and water on the Siva linga and keep awake the entire night. Method of worshipping the lingas is also to be found in the text as it states that, ‘on the thirteenth lunar day of the bright half a devotee should duly bathe Siva and worship by means of different kinds of flowers, sweet scents and incense in due order’ (Sk.P.VII.I.122.4). At the site of Dasarathesvara in Prabhasa Ksetra where there was a well established temple (Sk.P.VII.I.171.1-4) the text prescribes the devotee to offer worship to the deity on full moon day in the month of Kārttika by offering lamps and adorations (Sk.P. VII.I.171.6).

Another festival mentioned in the Skanda Purāṇa is Janamāṣṭmi which is celebrated to date in different parts of the country. It mentions, ‘On the eighth day in the dark half of Bhādra month Kṛṣnas birthday (is celebrated). Devotees shall take a holy dip there (in Gomati river) and keep awake at night (Sk.P. V.i.62. 28-32). They should propitiate the excellent devotees of Visnu eager to celebrate Kṛṣna’s birthday with various sweet smelling flowers, scents, garments and ornaments. Along with it they should worship cows and brahmanas with mental purity and concentration’ (Sk.P. V.i.62. 33-39). Other references to worship of Visnu is seen in, ‘In the bright half of Caitra on Ekādaśī day a devotee should after adoring Visnu offer Indian gooseberry and derive at every step during circumambulation (the benefit of donating a thousand cows) (Sk.P. V.i.62.33-39).

The text also describes a Rathayāträ in connection with Brahma. It mentions that the Rathayāträ (religious procession or a car festival) of the Lord in the month of Kārttika is glorified (Sk.P.VII.I.107.55). The person should take the four faced Lord clad in a deer hide and accompanied by Sāvitri all through the city. It should be on the full
moon day and many kinds of musical instruments should be played. After taking the
deity round the entire city he shall be installed (Sk.P.VII.I.107.56-57). At the outset
the brahmanas are to be fed and thereafter the deity is placed on the chariot to the
accompaniment of music played on different musical instruments (Sk.P.VII.I.107.58).

The devotees keep awake by seeing various kinds of visual scenes of dramatic
performances and listening to the profound sounds of the Vedic chants
(Sk.P.VII.I.107.60). After the devotee makes the chariot go round the city to the
accompaniment of conches and musical instruments, the Nirānjana rite is performed
and then the deity placed in its own original place (Sk.P.VII.I.107.63).

Existence of these festivals can be inferred on the basis of the mention of a festival in
the Purāṇa and in an inscription as well. The festival described in the Skanda Purāṇa
is Traipura festival celebrated on the full moon day in the month of Kārttika
(Sk.P.II.iv.33). On this day Siva killed the demon Tripura (Sk.P.II.iv.37) and in the
evening of this auspicious day lights are to be offered in a Siva temple (Sk.P.II.iv.40-
43) along with mantras. This festival is mentioned in a copper plate grant found in the
village of Sunev Kulla in Hansot Mahal of the Broach district. The grant is dated to
AD 540 or 541, and was made on the occasion of Mahākārttika, a day when a festival
is held in honour of Siva’s victory over Tripurāśura.52

The rituals mentioned above that were to be observed during the festivals were simple
and involved fasting, bathing the image of the deity, offering flowers, incense, lights
etc., and keeping awake at night. A common factor in these festivals was the central
role of the temple which was the focus of the various rituals. The temple seems to
have been a place where recitation of the Purāṇas, dance, music and worship of the
deity in its diverse forms took place. The royalty may also have participated in these

52 El. X; p.73-75
festivities. Thus, it is evident that temples were arenas of dialogues that shaped the beliefs and practices in the region.

In addition to Vedic studies and the performance of various festivals mentioned in the text, one notices new inputs as well. References to water bodies in the Mahābhārata consist mostly of rivers at sacred sites, while in the Skanda Purāṇa in addition to rivers a number of wells come into prominence as important components of the sacred landscape in Gujarat.

**Water as Sacred Sites in Literary Tradition**

The association of water and its sanctity as well as purifying and healing properties gains importance in the Skanda Purāṇa. In the third chapter of the thesis a discussion was carried out on the existence of wells as sacred sites on the basis of archaeological and sculptural remains. A similar trend is noticed in the literary tradition as well where a number of wells or kūṇḍas have been mentioned. Here two distinct trends can be noticed. On the one hand are wells where sculptural and archaeological data substantiate their sanctity, while on the other hand are wells that have legends associated to sanctify them as sacred.

While in the Mahābhārata there is mention of carrying out ritual bathing in rivers at the sacred sites of Prabhasa and Dwaraka, in the Skanda Purāṇa besides rivers a number of wells and kūṇḍas come to be considered as sacred. In most of the stories, one notices that ritual bathing helped the devotee attain salvation and free oneself from a number of sins. As has been pointed out by Savitri V. Kumar, “Salvation is attained by the holy water bath in most of the Puranic legends.”

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to the water deities. This is gathered from the story where Prabhasa, Puskara, Gaya, Naimisa and Kuruksetra go to Brahma and complain of becoming deformed and polluted due to the sins of the people who bathed in them (Sk.P.II-III.vii.2).

Stories associated with a number of kūndas located at sacred sites in Gujarat amply prove their power to free one from sins and help attain salvation. A holy bath in the kunda at Bhairavesvara and worship of the deity with injunctions regarding the five upacāras (Sk.P.VII. 149.2-3) ensures no rebirth and never meeting with destruction (Sk.P.VII.149.4). The Kundala kūpa located in Prabhasa Kṣetra is considered destructive of all sins (Sk.P.VII.148.49). A holy bath in this kūnda results in freeing oneself of the sin incurred from stealing (Sk.P.VII.I.148.1-4). Similarly the benefits accrued by taking a holy bath at Brahma kūnda consists of destroying ones sins. The sight of the kūnda destroys sins of seven births (Sk.P.VII.I.147.64) and an ablution in it is equivalent to taking a bath in all tīrthas on the earth and the benefit of worshipping all deities (Sk.P.VII.I.147.63). After taking a bath if one circumambulates the kūnda fifteen times it is considered as good as circumambulating the whole earth consisting of the seven continents, together with seven nether worlds and surrounded by crores of tīrthas (Sk.P.VII.I.147.67). By drinking water from this kūnda one does not incur any sin, whether mental, physical or verbal (Sk.P.VII.I.147.75). Also located in the Prabhasa Kṣetra is a well on the bank of Devika river, and it is said that if some one produces the sound ‘hum’ the well is filled up with water, and a bath in this well destroys all sins (Sk.P.VII.2.339).

At certain sites water also had the power to cure ailments as seen in the story associated with Somanatha and curing of Soma of phthisis at the site. A kūnda with

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healing properties was that of Ratnaditya located in the Prabhasa Kṣetra. A dip in this kūṇḍa not only caused destruction of all sins (Sk.P.VI.212.10), but also helped get rid of leprous ailments, if one bathes on the seventh lunar day in the bright half of the month of Māgha coinciding with a Sunday (Sk.P.VI.212.11). To the north western side of this is the water tank by the name of Dhanvantari where a holy bath with great devotion aids in dispelling every ailment (Sk.P.VI.212.15).

The importance of these is evident in their capacity as places where one can wash of ones sins, and as sites that also cure certain ailments. While literary tradition accounts for the wells at the major sites of Hatakesvara, Somanatha and Dwarka, archaeology on the other hand demonstrates their existence as an integral part of religious life in Gujarat and more specifically Saurashtra.

Upto this point in the chapter one notices that various religious processes were at play in the region. These include continuity of Vedic studies from an earlier period, existence of rituals such as the śrāddha that are a mixture of the Vedic and Puranic, recognition of already important sites such as wells and also an attempt to incorporate more people into the Puranic fold through performances and recitations of sacred texts. Some rituals encountered in the Skanda Purāṇa demonstrate the acceptance and inclusion of local customs at some of the sites in the region, which shall now be discussed.

**Incorporation of Local Beliefs and Practices in the Skanda Purāṇa**

By the time of the compilation of the Skanda Purāṇa, Dwarka becomes one of the seven cities which are the bestower of salvation, and these are Kasi, Kanti, Maya, Ayodhya, Dvāravatī Mathura and Avantika (Sk.P. IV.i.6.68). There are constant references to the site being one where salvation can be attained, a concept that is not seen in regard to these sites in the Mahābhārata. 'People should always
renounce their bodies at Dvārāvatī with a desire to conquer (attain) the world of Visnu. Another man who is free from sickness and observes fast (unto death) becomes free from all sins and goes to the city of Visnu’ (Sk.P. III. i. 26.1-4). Another instance being, ‘Urged by the god of death when creatures die at Dvārāvatī, they become Visnu in Vaikuntha endowed with four arms and wearing yellow clothes’ (Sk.P. IV.i.7.111).

The soil of Dwarka is also given importance in the Skanda Purāṇa as it mentions, ‘One by whom a tilaka with (local) clay (called Gopicandana) has been applied at Dwarka should certainly be known to be a living liberated soul’ (Sk.P. II.iv.4.34-39). Similarly at the site of Śukla tīrtha the application of mud from the tīrtha and a holy bath at the site helps attain the benefit of all the tīrthas (Sk.P.VI.123.51).

A unique ritual for the site of Somanatha is encountered in the text. This entails the offering of gold bracelet in the sea and the story revolves around a queen by the name of Indumati. She was born as a cowherdess in her previous life and had five husbands. She lost all her husbands and went to Somesvara where she took a holy bath in the sea. In the process she lost her gold bracelet and because of this meritorious act carried out unknowingly she was married to king Bṛhadratha in her next life. Upon realizing the importance of this she offered a gold bracelet every year and because of this she attained the state of Deva (Sk.P. VII.I.37).

The worship of Śāligrāma is equated with the worship of Visnu as the stone was marked by his discus and it leads to salvation (Sk.P.VI.243.37). Worship of this stone and a stone from Dvārāvatī is advised for the home (Sk.P.VI.243.39) and when worshipped with the leaves of the tulasī plant then death averts that home(Sk.P.VI.243.44). It should be especially worshipped during Cāturamāśya (Sk.P.VI.243.50), offered light (Sk.P.VI.243.53), bathed with water containing
sandalwood paste and *tulasi* leaves (Sk.P.VI.243.58) and offered a mass of incense (Sk.P.VI.243.62). It is evident from this that the worship was simple and did not require the assistance of a brahmana or uttering of any complicated mantras. Worship of Visnu and attainment of salvation became even more simplified through the worship of this stone, which could be carried out in one’s home.

A look at the evidence available for the sites of Dwarka and Somanatha or the Prabhasa Kṣetra also seems to point to a process of recording and recognizing the sites as important sacred centres of Gujarat, and not a process whereby these become important due to any role played by the brahmanas or the ruling elite.

**Somanatha and Dwarka in Literature and Archaeology**

An analysis of the literary references to the sites of Dwarka and Somanatha and the archaeological and inscriptive data pertaining to them, indicates the marginal role played by the *Purāṇas* in contributing either to the establishment, popularity or importance of the sites. These sites had attained importance prior to the compilation of the *Skanda Purāṇa*. Available archaeological and inscriptive evidence concerning the major sacred sites in the region makes it apparent that the *Skanda Purāṇa* contains a description of what existed on the ground. Dwarka and Somanatha are two important sacred sites that find mention in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Skanda Purāṇa* and these are the only two temple sites that have been dealt with in the literary tradition, as compared to other temple sites located along the coastline of Saurashtra. The exclusion of other temple sites may have been due to the major concern of the *Purāṇa* in detailing sacred sites that had greater antiquity and a wider influence in the region. A case study of Somanatha as described in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Skanda Purāṇa*, and the available archaeological records demonstrate a coming together of the literary and archaeological traditions.
While in the *Mahābhārata* the site of Prabhasa Patan/Somanatha is associated mainly with the Somesvara linga, by the time of the compilation of the *Skanda Purāṇa* the sacred area of Prabhasa Patan is extended and is known as Prabhasa Kṣetra which contained numerous lingas, temple sites and lingas described in the text. The site of Somanatha with the Somesvara linga is said to be located in the Prabhasa Kṣetra. The Kṣetra is said to extend twelve yojanas (12x12=144 kms) and the abode of Someśvara is in the middle of it (Sk.P.VII.I.7.60-61). It is described as being located at the confluence of Reva and Aurvi (Sk.P. V.iii.85.1-10) and at the confluence of Sarasvati and the ocean (Sk.P. VII.I.10.28). Reference to the existence of temples at the site is also found in the text as it mentions, ‘Somaraja brought Brahma, the Lord of the Universe, to the great Prabhāsikā tīrtha along with Savitri and all the sages. Lord Brahma then erected a hundred ṛta and caused a hundred kuṇḍas to be dug’ (Sk.P. VII.I.23.85-86). Of these numerous kuṇḍas and ṛta only a few can be identified.

A study carried out by S.N. Desai on the sites mentioned as being located in the Prabhasa Kṣetra and their actual location on ground shows that this *Purāṇa* was describing sites on ground. Due to Muslim invasions many of the sites got destroyed, but many still exist. In some cases while the structure may have not survived, the images are to be seen in newer temples and locations. In total, the area had 195 temples dedicated to Siva, 5 to Visnu, 25 to goddesses, 19 Surya temples, five Ganesa temples, 8 tīrthas, two vāpīs, three kūpas, 2 forests, 19 kuṇḍas and one āśrama. Of these the author has been able to identify some temple sites, the existence of some lingas and old images, now part of newer temple structures.

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The temples at the sites of Candisa, Angaresvara, Kapilesvara and Bhairesvara have been ravaged and reduced to rubble. Many of the sites mentioned in the Purana are not identifiable and their existence earlier is also uncertain. In other instances the temple sites exist but their names have undergone slight changes. For instance Varunesvara is now known as Venesvara, Citresvara is known as Citravicitra and Javardaghdesvara is currently called Rotlesvara.

Instances where the object of worship survives and can be located are the Kamesvara linga currently in the Sharda matha, the Citrgandhesvara linga, the Ravanesvara linga seen at kotha Khadki, the Caturbhuja Mahadeva image in the Junagadh museum, the damaged Ratanesvara linga seen lying in the fields and the Jamdagnesvara linga in Golvd area of Prabhasa city. Similarly, in the case of temples dedicated to other deities some of the images can be located. The original temple housing the image of Daityasudana was destroyed and is now in a new temple. The image of Mahisasuramardini is currently worshipped as Brahmapuri Mata and that of Mahakali is housed in a new temple. The image of Kumbhodhar Ganesa is now in the Junagadh museum.

Certain temple structures were also identified by the author, even though many were destroyed during the medieval period. Some can still be located and at times have other names. Of the Saivite temples mentioned in the Skanda Purana the temple of

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57S. N.Desai, Prabhasa ane Somanatha, Mayur Printry, Ahmedabad,1965; p.467
58S. N Desai, Prabhasa ane Somanatha, Mayur Printry, Ahmedabad,1965;p.468
59S. N.Desai, Prabhasa ane Somanatha, Mayur Printry, Ahmedabad,1965; p.467
59S. N.Desai, Prabhasa ane Somanatha, Mayur Printry, Ahmedabad,1965; p.472
59S. N Desai, Prabhasa ane Somanatha, Mayur Printry, Ahmedabad,1965; p.470
60S. N Desai, Prabhasa ane Somanatha, Mayur Printry, Ahmedabad,1965; p.469
60S. N Desai, Prabhasa ane Somanatha, Mayur Printry, Ahmedabad,1965; p.471
61S. N Desai, Prabhasa ane Somanatha, Mayur Printry, Ahmedabad,1965; p.472
62S. N Desai, Prabhasa ane Somanatha, Mayur Printry, Ahmedabad,1965; p.473
63S. N Desai, Prabhasa ane Somanatha, Mayur Printry, Ahmedabad,1965; p.473
64S. N Desai, Prabhasa ane Somanatha, Mayur Printry, Ahmedabad,1965; p.475
65S. N Desai, Prabhasa ane Somanatha, Mayur Printry, Ahmedabad,1965; p.476
66S. N Desai, Prabhasa ane Somanatha, Mayur Printry, Ahmedabad,1965; p.477
67S. N Desai, Prabhasa ane Somanatha, Mayur Printry, Ahmedabad,1965; p.478
68S. N Desai, Prabhasa ane Somanatha, Mayur Printry, Ahmedabad,1965; p.479
Ramesvara is now a new structure located at the Triveni, Medhesvara is seen close to the ghāt, Katesvara was converted to a mosque by the ruler of Mangrol, Bhutesvara is in the Ramrakh chowk maṭha where currently a library stands, Kshemesvara was possibly located where a masjid stands now and a new temple stands at Mankesvara located at the confluence of Hiranya and Sarasvati. Of the temples dedicated to the goddesses the temples of Yogesvari, Kumaresvari, Mahālaksmi and 64 Yoganis, Bhūtamārkhā and Sarasvati have been located. Of the temples dedicated to Surya the ones that still exist are those of Sagaraditya, Citraditya and Nagaraditya.

The ever growing and increasing importance of Somanatha within and outside the region of Gujarat made it inevitable for the Purāṇa compilers to record the site and its environs in great detail. The site of Somanatha has been associated with the Lakulisa Pasupata cult and is considered as an important site of this sect. “That the temple of Somanatha was the all India centre of the Pasupata cult during the historical times is indisputable.” It has been pointed out that long before the second century AD the head of the Pasupata cult had its headquarters at Prabhasa, and that the principal shrine of Siva was established by the beginning of the Christian era. Rather than attributing the foundation of the site to the Moon god, it is possible that it owes its origin to the historical personage Soma Ṣarman, a Saivite brahmana whose date is

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72 S. N. Desai, Prabhasa ane Somanatha, Mayur Printry, Ahmedabad, 1965; p. 475
73 S. N. Desai, Prabhasa ane Somanatha, Mayur Printry, Ahmedabad, 1965; p. 476
74 S. N. Desai, Prabhasa ane Somanatha, Mayur Printry, Ahmedabad, 1965; p. 476
75 S. N. Desai, Prabhasa ane Somanatha, Mayur Printry, Ahmedabad, 1965; p. 471
76 S. N. Desai, Prabhasa ane Somanatha, Mayur Printry, Ahmedabad, 1965; p. 472
77 S. N. Desai, Prabhasa ane Somanatha, Mayur Printry, Ahmedabad, 1965; p. 474
78 S. N. Desai, Prabhasa ane Somanatha, Mayur Printry, Ahmedabad, 1965; p. 477-478
79 S. N. Desai, Prabhasa ane Somanatha, Mayur Printry, Ahmedabad, 1965; p. 479
80 Kaushik J. Bhatt, Selected Sculptures in Prabhas Patan Museum, MA Dissertation, MSU, Vododara, 1982; p. 16
81 Kaushik J. Bhatt, Selected Sculptures in Prabhas Patan Museum, MA Dissertation, MSU, Vododara, 1982; p. 16
fixed in the latter half of the 1st century AD.\textsuperscript{82} Inscriptional evidence points to the site being a sacred centre as well since the Karle and Nasik inscriptions record the visit of Nahapana to Prabhasa tirtha where he had given eight wives to brahmanas.\textsuperscript{83}

The construction of the second temple at the site has been ascribed to the Maitraka period on the basis of a defaced Brahmi inscription found at the site during excavations.\textsuperscript{84} The \textit{garbhagṛha} of this second temple was constructed on the spot where the first temple stood and it also possibly had an open \textit{sabhāmandapa}.\textsuperscript{85} Near shore excavations also brought to light six Siva \textit{lingas} with yonis at a depth of 1.64 feet\textsuperscript{86} further attesting to the Saivite association of the site. Thus the text seems to be an enumeration of sites already existing in and around Somanatha, which now have legends and stories attached to them.

Similarly in the case of Dwarka it is again noticed that an already important sacred centre was incorporated within the \textit{Skanda Purāṇa} and its extent increased. The site is also known as Kuśāsthali in the literary tradition and debates have taken place on the identification of the Dwārāvatī described in the \textit{Mahābhārata}, as the site is said to be located on the west coast near Raivataka hill. After a careful analysis, S.R.Rao is of the opinion that the site is represented by the present Bet Dwarka. According to him, "Kuśāsthali is identified with Antadvipa of the \textit{Mahābhārata} which was a pleasure resort of the Yadavas. The topography of the island is compatible with the description in the epic of a hill on the east and sea on the other sides. The terraced hills of the island that are wooded are even now covered with āśam trees. According to the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{82} M.A.Dhaky & H.P.Shastri, \textit{Riddle of the Temple of Somanatha}, Bharata Manisha, Varanasi, 1974; p.31
\item \textsuperscript{83} \textit{EI}, Vol.VII; p.57 & \textit{EI}, Vol.VIII; p.78
\item \textsuperscript{84} Kaushik J. Bhatt, \textit{Selected Sculptures in Prabhas Patan Museum}, MA Dissertation, MSU, Vododara, 1982; p.17
\item \textsuperscript{85} Kaushik J. Bhatt, \textit{Selected Sculptures in Prabhas Patan Museum}, MA Dissertation, MSU, Vododara, 1982; p.18
\item \textsuperscript{86} S.R.Rao, \textit{The Lost City of Dwārakā}, Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi, 1999; p.93
\end{itemize}
The *Mahābhārata* the Yadavas occupied Kuśāsthali and fortified it. This is testified by the archaeological remains in form of massive stone walls in the sea.⁸⁷

In the *Skanda Purāṇa* the site of Kuśāsthali is described as being established by Kuśa and was on the coast of the western sea where Gomati met the sea. (Sk.P. Prabhasa Khanda, Dvārakā Ksetra Māhāmya, 2) This site is clearly the present day Dwarka where the Gomati flows and a number of ghāts are noticed along its course at the site. Prior to the compilation of this *Purāṇa* the site had acquired importance as an important site of Visnu worship and as the abode of Kṛṣṇa. The earliest reference to Dwarka in the early historical period as a seat of Kṛṣṇa in Okha is found in the copper plate grant of the Garulaka ruler Simhaditya dated to AD 574 which mentions Kṛṣṇa as the ‘Lord of Dvārakā.’⁸⁸ It states that Simhaditya overcame the lord of Dvārakā by unchecked valour, as Śāṅgapāṇi (Kṛṣṇa) possessed unchecked valour and was the Lord of Dvārakā.⁸⁹ Rao further points out that the temples of Agni, Varuna and Indra described in the Visnu Parva of the *Harivaṁśa Purāṇa*, which is dated to the 5th century AD, can still be located. The temples of Samudranārāyaṇa, Agnidevata and other deities can be seen along the coast.⁹⁰

As for the temple structure at the site, excavations reveal an early date for it. The first temple at the site was constructed in the third period of occupation on the mainland of Dwarka and is dated between 2nd century BC and the 6th century AD.⁹¹ Excavations brought to light architectural pieces that may have belonged to a temple dating to the 5th - 7th century AD. In the debris was found moulding and finials of temples with small spires were found in the neighbourhood. In addition to this it was noticed that a small rectangular shrine of tapering roof, surmounted by a finial lies in the main hall

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of the temple today, and this seems architecturally to be the earliest shrine at Dwarka, and along with similar shrines along the coast of Saurashtra it can be placed in 5th to 7th century AD.92 Further excavations brought to light a temple dating to the 8th century AD and on the northern side of the temple two images of four armed Visnu were found which can be dated to the 8th century AD as well.93 As in the case of Somanatha here too the compilers seem to have been incorporating already sacred sites in the region in the text and not legitimizing or promoting any new site. This becomes further evident when in the Dvāракā māhātmya section of this Purāṇa mention is found of the presence of a Trivikrama image of Visnu in the main shrine, which is in actuality a cult image in the temple at the site.94 In the satellite area of Dwarka at the site of Pindara a rock cut yoni dating to the early historical period was encountered during excavations.95

From the analysis carried out above it is apparent that multiple religious processes were taking place within the region of Gujarat. More than the royalty and the brahmanas, it was the inhabitants and their beliefs and practices that seem to have shaped the process. Even though religious developments in the region were part of wider pan Indian processes, the region retained its uniqueness as the following data shall prove.

**Religious Developments in Gujarat in a Wider Pan Indian Context**

Religious developments in a region cannot be viewed in isolation as these are part of wider religious networks. Especially in the case of Gujarat which had trade contacts through out the period of its history, it is necessary to trace the religious developments here in context with other parts of the country. In order to do so a study of two

92 Zainuddin Dawood Ansari & M.S. Mate, *Excavations at Dwarka*, Deccan College Poona, 1966; p.16
95 S.R. Rao, *The Lost City of Dvā rakā*, Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi, 1999; p.117
here in context with other parts of the country. In order to do so a study of two images, namely Viśvarūpa Visnu and Pañcāgnitapas Parvati, shall be carried out.

**Viśvarūpa Visnu**

The Viśvarūpa Visnu images have been recovered mostly from the area around Shamalji and Devnimori. These sites are located in northern Gujarat and are in close proximity to each other. The image represents Visnu in a multi figured form along with many other deities. The images date from the 6th century AD to the 9th century AD and one of these being an image from Kathlal.96 A detailed study of these images has been carried out by T.S.Maxwell97 informing us of the origin of these multi headed images, their experimental phases, analysis of the method of carving them and their spread to different regions in India. Maxwell points out that this type of Viśvarūpa sculpture was invented in western India98 and the archaeological evidence for a perpetuation of iconographic formula established at Shamalaji consisted of sculpted fragments from Shamalaji and Devnimori, a damaged sculpture at Kathlal and a pillar relief at Mandasor.99 The image is unique to the region as similar representations are not to be found elsewhere. The images from the sites were an attempt to represent the, “Vaisnava cosmogonic and cosmological doctrines which prevailed in Samlaji in the sixth century AD.”100

In his study Maxwell traces the origin of these Viśvarūpa Visnu images to the region of Mathura and an imitation of Gupta iconography.101 In his opinion the Shamalaji sculptors were well versed enough in the iconographical formulae of the northern

97 T.S.Maxwell, Viśvarūpa, OUP, Delhi, 1988
98 T.S.Maxwell, Viśvarūpa, OUP, Delhi, 1988; p.144
100 T.S.Maxwell, Viśvarūpa, OUP, Delhi, 1988; p.184
101 T.S.Maxwell,Viśvarūpa, OUP, Delhi, 1988; p.144
sculpture centre for them to have experimented with it,\textsuperscript{102} and the images mark the perpetuation and development of the Kushana multiform sculpture in western India.\textsuperscript{103} The source of these images has been traced by him to the Kushana ‘B’ type of images which is a composition of several partly represented figures which are co joined obliquely and vertically and most of the images discussed by him regarding the source of the complex Visnu image, belong to Mathura and its surrounding areas.\textsuperscript{104} Even though the origin of the Viśvarūpa Visnu images are traced to the region of Mathura, the fragments found at Shamalaji demonstrate that the sculptors of the region did not blindly copy but experimented with the basic form to create images that are unique to the area around Shamalaji. Maxwell points out that Viśvarūpa Visnu images were being developed at the site when the Gupta School at Mathura was ignoring it, as those found from Shamalaji are more complicated in iconographic terms than any of the later versions.\textsuperscript{105} The uniqueness in the conception and creation of the images also lies in the fact that the sculptors at this site did not rely on the Gītā tradition, which was prevalent in Mathura region, and relied rather on more ancient texts, which spoke of the archetypal forms such as the egg and the tree, which the designers adapted freely.\textsuperscript{106} While on the one hand the images from Shamalaji demonstrate the wider connection of Gujarat with the area around Mathura, on the other hand the influence of this image on the iconographic developments at Deogarh in Uttar Pradesh is also noticed. The Viśvarūpa Visnu images at Deogarh, it has been pointed out, derive mainly from Shamalaji and Mathura.\textsuperscript{107} The essential form of the Deogarh image consisted as in

\textsuperscript{102} T.S. Maxwell, \textit{Viśvarūpa}, OUP, Delhi, 1988; p.149
\textsuperscript{103} T.S. Maxwell, \textit{Viśvarūpa}, OUP, Delhi, 1988; p. 155
\textsuperscript{104} T.S. Maxwell, \textit{Viśvarūpa}, OUP, Delhi, 1988; p.2
\textsuperscript{105} T.S. Maxwell, \textit{Viśvarūpa}, OUP, Delhi, 1988; p. 156
\textsuperscript{106} T.S. Maxwell, \textit{Viśvarūpa}, OUP, Delhi, 1988; p.155-156
\textsuperscript{107} T.S. Maxwell, \textit{Viśvarūpa}, OUP, Delhi, 1988; p.233
the case of Shamalaji of an egg containing a tree, or a yūpā floating upright upon the waters which are represented by the nagas.\textsuperscript{108} Certain features that were borrowed from the Shamalaji sculpture in the iconography of Viśvarūpa Visnu were the nagas at the base\textsuperscript{109} and the placement of the figures within the nimbus facing outwards away from Visnu and the three figures above.\textsuperscript{110} The site of Shamalaji proves then to be an important centre of experimentation and creation of Viśvarūpa Visnu images as it aids in connecting the iconographical developments from the Gupta period onwards to the 9\textsuperscript{th} century AD when the sculpture was finally standardized at Kanauj.\textsuperscript{111} Shamalaji is an important link in the iconographic development of this form of Visnu, which linked Gujarat to sites in eastern India as well. The origin being from Mathura, the images at Deogarh being influenced by the developments at Shamalaji clearly points to an interaction between these two regions. As opined by Maxwell, "From Mandasor the iconographic influence of Samalaji spread still further eastward to combine with that of Mathura and Kashmir at Deogarh, where the experimental image based upon these converging concepts and styles, which was to be developed at Kanauj and spread through out the north, was with historical inevitability at last created."\textsuperscript{112}

\textbf{Paṅcāṅgitapās Parvati}

The other type of images that I would like to discuss, to place developments in Gujarat in a wider network, are images that represent Parvati performing the Paṅcāṅgitapās. The earlier and later representations of the goddess found at different sites in Gujarat are in a way unique to the region. Representations of this goddess from various sites in the country depict her in varied forms. These variations occur

\textsuperscript{108} T.S.Maxwell, \textit{Viśvarūpa}, OUP, Delhi, 1988; p.237
\textsuperscript{109} T.S.Maxwell, \textit{Viśvarūpa}, OUP, Delhi, 1988; p.239
\textsuperscript{110} T.S.Maxwell, \textit{Viśvarūpa}, OUP, Delhi, 1988; p.247
\textsuperscript{111} T.S.Maxwell, \textit{Viśvarūpa}, OUP, Delhi, 1988; p.269.
\textsuperscript{112} T.S.Maxwell, Evidence for Viśvarūpa Iconographic Tradition in Western India- 6\textsuperscript{th} to 9\textsuperscript{th} century AD, in \textit{Arthibus Asiae}, Vol. 44, 1983; p. 233
mostly in the presence or absence of the fires, the stag, lion, her attendants and additional figures such as Siva, Ganesa and the navagrhas. A comparative analysis of the early images found here and in different parts of the country shows that a certain method of depicting her was established in Gujarat at an early period, and was followed more or less in the later periods as well. If nothing else it seems as though the style from Gujarat was later adapted at temple sites of Madhya Pradesh.

An analysis of the images found from different sites demonstrates that the earliest image is encountered in Gujarat. First, I shall describe the early images found in different regions outside Gujarat, and then carry out a comparative analysis. As for other regions a detailed study has been carried out by N.P. Joshi on a hundred and sixteen images from various parts of the country starting with AD 400-500 and continuing up to the medieval period. Of these forty nine hail from sites in Uttar Pradesh, forty four from Madhya Pradesh, seven each from Rajasthan and Gujarat and two from Haryana. According to the author the earliest images are from the sites of Mandhal and Patur in Maharashtra, dated from AD 400 to AD 500 wherein the goddess is depicted standing and is wearing no ornaments. In the Patur images Parvati is seen holding a rosary in her right hand and water vessel in the left and here the agnikundas are absent. Thereafter is the image from Cave 21 at Ellora dating to AD 600 in which she is depicted with two arms holding an akṣamālā in the right and a ghata in the left hand and a deer skin is seen on her left shoulder. Also, seen is Siva in the guise of a brahmaśrīrin and in the lower field are a few attendants of

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113 N.P. Joshi, Tapasvini Parvati- Iconographic Study of Parvati in Penance, New Age International Limited Publishers, New Delhi, 1996
114 N.P. Joshi, Tapasvini Parvati- Iconographic Study of Parvati in Penance, New Age International Limited Publishers, New Delhi, 1996
115 N.P. Joshi, Tapasvini Parvati- Iconographic Study of Parvati in Penance, New Age International Limited Publishers, New Delhi, 1996; p.10
116 N.P. Joshi, Tapasvini Parvati- Iconographic Study of Parvati in Penance, New Age International Limited Publishers, New Delhi, 1996; p. 11
Siva.\textsuperscript{118} Dating to the same period is another image from Kannauj and here too she has two hands with a deer skin on her shoulder and the left hand holding a ghata and no agnikūṇḍas.\textsuperscript{119}

Of the various elements that are present along with the image of Parvati, Joshi opines that these were not essential features. For instance the agnikūṇḍas appear from the 1\textsuperscript{st} -2\textsuperscript{nd} century AD but they were not an essential feature, and within these variations are noticed as seen in the case of images from south India where agnikūṇḍas are placed near the feet rather than on the sides.\textsuperscript{120} Similarly, the lion and stag appear together from the 6\textsuperscript{th} -7\textsuperscript{th} century AD and were also not essential to the image.\textsuperscript{121} In the case of the Siva linga and Ganesa the author opines that their presence can be traced from the mid 7\textsuperscript{th} century AD along with the agnikūṇḍas\textsuperscript{122} and most of the images described by the author date to the 8\textsuperscript{th} century AD. The author opines that, “Roughly upto the 6\textsuperscript{th} century AD the sculptural trend was moving under one and the same tradition, but just after that period (beginning of 8\textsuperscript{th} century AD) there appears a change. The original tradition in various regional schools started taking liberties in different ways and brought forth several forms of one and the same class.”\textsuperscript{123}

I shall now turn to two early images found in Gujarat that demonstrate a different trend of development. The earliest image is a small one from an unidentified spot and currently located in the Department of Archaeology and Ancient History of M.S.University of Vadodara. The image dates to the 3\textsuperscript{rd} -4\textsuperscript{th} century AD and Parvati is

\textsuperscript{118} N.P. Joshi, Tapasvini Parvati- Iconographic Study of Parvati in Penance, New Age International Limited Publishers, New Delhi,1996; p.11
\textsuperscript{119} N.P. Joshi, Tapasvini Parvati- Iconographic Study of Parvati in Penance, New Age International Limited Publishers, New Delhi,1996; p.12
\textsuperscript{120} N.P. Joshi, Tapasvini Parvati- Iconographic Study of Parvati in Penance, New Age International Limited Publishers, New Delhi,1996; p.17-18
\textsuperscript{121} N.P. Joshi, Tapasvini Parvati- Iconographic Study of Parvati in Penance, New Age International Limited Publishers, New Delhi,1996; p.18
\textsuperscript{122} N.P. Joshi, Tapasvini Parvati- Iconographic Study of Parvati in Penance, New Age International Limited Publishers, New Delhi,1996; p.19
\textsuperscript{123} N.P. Joshi. Tapasvini Parvati- Iconographic Study of Parvati in Penance, New Age International Limited Publishers, New Delhi,1996; p. 13
shown holding a small Siva linga on a lotus stalk, the upper left hand holds a Ganesa on a crooked staff and the lower right is in abhayamudrā. Lotus design is engraved in the prabhāmaṇḍala and four navagrahas are visible above her head.124 As compared to the other images discussed above this would seem to be the earliest representation of the goddess found from any site. It also establishes that in this early period Gujarat was formulating and creating its own representation of Parvati performing penance as it does not have any similarities with images of the 5th-6th century AD. According to N.P.Joshi, “In early images Parvati’s maid friends, attendants or subordinate are absent”,125 but this image proves the contrary. The later images found from Gujarat further attest the existence of a sculptural trend within the region that continues over time.

The 6th century AD sculpture from Gujarat is from Vagpur and this image does not bear any similarity with other 6th century images found either from sites in Madhya Pradesh or south India which have been discussed above. The goddess is shown holding a Siva linga in the upper right hand, a miniature Ganesa in the upper left and the lower right is in abhayamudrā and the navagrahas in the image form an arch on the halo.126

Three images dating to the 8th century AD are found in Gujarat, of which two are from the temple site at Roda and one is from Karvan, further demonstrating continuity in the iconographical representation of this goddess in Gujarat. In one image from Roda, Parvati is shown seated on a lotus almost cross legged and she has four arms holding the aksamālā, padma in two hand and a ghatā. Ganesa and Siva linga are

125 N.P.Joshi, Tapasvini Parvati- Iconographic Study of Parvati in Penance, New Age International Limited Publishers, New Delhi,1996; p. 13
seen on the two lotus flowers she holds in her upper two arms. Also seen are four agnikūṇḍas and two devotees below. The other image hailing from the same site depicts her standing, bedecked with ornaments and she has four arms of which two hold the lotus, the lower ones hold an akṣamāḷā and a ghaṭā. She is represented as standing in a shrine or niche with two square pillars with a rough pūrnaghaṭā motif on them. On the top of the right pillar is the Siva linga on the platform while on the top left one is a small image of a two armed Ganesa and two fire altars are seen on each side of the goddess. The nine heads on the halo symbolize the grhas in the image.

The next image is from Falwa Tekri (mound) at Karvan, which is four feet high. Here too the goddess has four arms, is in standing posture and carries a rosary and lotus in her right and upper left hands. Near the feet, two kneeling figures are noticed and also depicted are the fire altars. Another image from Sindhavi Mata temple at Karvan is dated to the latter half of the 7th century AD and only the lower portion of the image remains. Here too she is depicted in a standing pose with the agnikūṇḍas and a devotee on either side. The third image from Karvan is dated to the 8th - 9th century AD and is embedded in the modern shrine of Lakulisa known as the Rajarajesvara temple. The attendants are seen on either side holding fly whisks, and while the lower hands of Parvati are mutilated, the upper left shows a small seated Ganesa. The upper right hand is defaced but probably had a lotus with a Siva linga.

An analysis of the images dating from the 3rd -4th century AD to the 8th -9th century AD demonstrates that the main idea of depicting this form of Parvati did not undergo any major change in the region. In all the images found the deity is seen along with

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129 N.P. Joshi, Tapasvini Parvati- Iconographic Study of Parvati in Penance, New Age International Limited Publishers, New Delhi, 1996; p.60
Ganesa and the Siva linga seen on lotus stalks held by her in her upper two arms and only minor variations are visible such as depicting the goddess standing or sitting, with or without ornamentation and the fly whisks in the hand of the attendants. These variations testify the minor experimentations being carried out within a given sculptural tradition. These may have resulted due to exchange of ideas with other sites within the country, which were also crafting images of this goddess. Of the 8th century AD the only site outside Gujarat with a similar representation of the goddess is at Malagaon in Sirohi district. Here she is seen standing with ornaments, has four hands, four agnikunjas are seen next to her, two female attendants flank her and seven heads are seen on the halo. As in images from Gujarat in this image also she is seen holding a linga and Ganesa on lotus stalks.\textsuperscript{133}

The other noteworthy feature in the images is the nine planets, which place the iconographical developments in Gujarat on a wider pan Indian perspective. Joshi points out that in a number of figures from central and western regions of the country the back slab, just above the goddess’s head is seen occupied by nine planets.\textsuperscript{134} Of the 8th - 9th century the few images that have this are from Roda and Karvan in Gujarat, and Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh\textsuperscript{135}. Depiction of the Siva linga and Ganesa on the lateral pilasters or additional rathika platforms seen in the 8th century image from Karvan, is seen in the 9th century images from Madhya Pradesh\textsuperscript{136}. Ganesa and the linga are also noticed in an image from Sivadvara in Sonabhadra located in Uttar

\textsuperscript{133} N.P.Joshi, \textit{Tapasvini Parvati- Iconographic Study of Parvati in Penance}, New Age International Limited Publishers, New Delhi,1996; p. 60
\textsuperscript{134} N.P.Joshi, \textit{Tapasvini Parvati- Iconographic Study of Parvati in Penance}, New Age International Limited Publishers, New Delhi,1996; p.27
\textsuperscript{135} N.P.Joshi, \textit{Tapasvini Parvati- Iconographic Study of Parvati in Penance}, New Age International Limited Publishers, New Delhi,1996; p.60
\textsuperscript{136} N.P.Joshi, \textit{Tapasvini Parvati- Iconographic Study of Parvati in Penance}, New Age International Limited Publishers, New Delhi,1996; p.62
Pradesh.\textsuperscript{137} Even though small, these minor features in images from Gujarat and sites in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh indicate interaction between these two regions, which led to the existence of certain common features in images of Pañcāgni tapas Parvati, even though Gujarat continued to craft the images in its own iconographical trend of representing the goddess.

The above two iconographic representations of Visnu and Parvati help locate Gujarat in a wider pan Indian context. The region was also important in terms of the sculptural developments as is seen in the case of these images. The region crafted images that were specific to it and it is these images that then seem to have influenced artisans at sites in northern and southern India. The Viśvarūpa Visnu images from Shamalaji influenced artisans in Deogarh, and the images of Pañcāgni tapas Parvati from Gujarat were the earliest to represent the goddess with the Siva linga and Ganesa. This form of representation not only continues in Gujarat but is also seen at temple sites in Madhya Pradesh.

\textbf{Conclusion}

This chapter aimed at bringing forth the religious processes within Gujarat and also placing developments here in a wider context. The above discussion brings forth the multiple religious processes that were taking place in Gujarat. Three processes are discernable which are - continuity of the Vedic rites and rituals, a mixture of the local and ‘Brahmanical’, and the incorporation of local beliefs and practices such as application of the local mud in Dwarka. The existence of step wells at the sites of Dhank, Hatab and Roda demonstrates the importance of these in the religious beliefs of Gujarat. The compilers of the \textit{Skanda Purāṇa} recognized this as one notices a number of sites with wells and their ability to wash away sins and cure diseases.

\textsuperscript{137} N.P. Joshi, \textit{Tapasvini Parvati- Iconographic Study of Parvati in Penance}, New Age International Limited Publishers, New Delhi, 1996; p.59
Similarly, in the case of the sites of Dwarka and Somanatha the compilers were incorporating and elaborating sites that had already acquired tremendous importance as sacred sites in Gujarat. Thus, the role of the brahmanas in this case did not involve the introduction and spread of a new religion, but more of an interaction and dialogue with local beliefs and practices.

The temple sites in Gujarat contain scant evidence of the involvement of the royalty in either their construction or maintenance. The few instances of temples constructed by the royalty cannot be located on ground. Since the temple priests and rituals specialists were not being supported on a large scale by the royalty, they must have required the support of the laity. Also the elaborate description of various dānas and benefits thereof, as well as it being an essential requirement to completion of any pilgrimage or rite, further demonstrates the dependence of the priestly class on the common man. An attempt to involve more people is apparent also in the Skanda Purāṇa as a number of festivals are mentioned where pilgrims would visit temples and this would be the time to narrate stories and legends in the common mans language who otherwise had no access to the Purāṇa written in Sanskrit. Thus while earlier practices continued, the Purāṇas symbolized an interaction of local and Brahmanical beliefs which led to the creation of a Purāṇa specific to the region. It records a process whereby the local beliefs, rites and rituals were not subsumed by the Brahmanical religion, but were recognized and included as integral components of the Skanda Purāṇa.

As for developments in the region in a wider pan Indian scale on the basis of the images discussed it is apparent that the region was an important centre of iconographic developments taking place. The images of Viśvarūpa Visnu amply prove the importance of Gujarat in providing continuity in its sculptural development
from Gupta period to the early medieval times. The site of Shamalaji and its environs developed a representation of the deity which was unique to the site and further influenced sculptural developments at other sites such as Deogarh. Even though the form of the image may have been taken from the Kushana images, but artisans in Gujarat worked further on it to create the most complicated iconographic representation, which could be copied in idea and not in form.

Similarly the representation of Pañcāginitapas Parvati demonstrates that the mode of depicting her with lotus stalks holding a Siva linga and Ganesa is the earliest to be found anywhere at all. It thus seems plausible to suggest that this style of representing her was developed first in Gujarat and was subsequently followed at certain other sites.

Sculptural analysis of these images shows that the artisans never copied blindly from other regions, but always experimented and created a visual representation of deities that suited the religious needs of the time. Simultaneously the constant interaction of sites in Gujarat with other parts in the country was also taking place, and it seems as though more than being influenced, the artisans and their images influenced iconographic developments elsewhere in the country.