INDRA-WORSHIP IN THE PURĀNAS.
CHAPTER III

INDRA IN THE PURANAS

There are three principal forms in which the religion of the Hindus has existed at as many different periods. The duration of those periods, the circumstances of their succession, and the precise state of the national faith at each period, is very difficult to trace accurately. The earliest form under which the Hindu religion existed is that taught in Vedas. The style of the language and purpose of composition found in Vedas indicate the earliest class of Sanskrit writings. The real doctrine of the whole Indian scriptures is the unity of the deity, in whom the universe is comprehended and it offers the elements, the stars and the planets as gods. The deities have been personified in Vedas but it is almost certain that worship of idols was no part of the system. It is true that the basic character of the ritual of the Vedas is the worship of the personified elements, of Agni or fire; Indra, the Firmament, Vayu, the Air, Varuna, the water, of Aditya, the sun, Soma, the moon and other elementary and the planetary personages.

In Indian epics i.e., in Ramayana and Mahabharata, we find the doctrine of incarnation. Both Rama and Krsna are the incarnations of god Visnu, and all the chief characters are impersonations of gods and demi-gods and celestial spirits. Here the doctrines of propitation by penance and praise prevails throughout and Visnu and Siva are invoked as Supremo gods. So departure from the elemental worship of the Vedas occurs in the epics and the origin or elaboration
of legends in mythological religion of the Hindus takes shape.

The different works known by the name of Purāṇas are evidently derived from the same religious system as the Rāmāyana and Mahābhārata or from the mythological stage of Hindu belief. They present, however, peculiarities which designate their belonging to a latter period, and to an important modification in the progress of opinion. They repeat the theoretical cosmogony of the two great epics, they expand and systematize the chronological computation, and they give a more definite and connected representation of the mythological fictions and the historical tradition. They also give characteristic peculiarities of a more modern description and the importance they assign to each divinity. In Purāṇas Śiva and Viṣṇu emerge as the sole object of worship in departing from the domestic and elemental rituals of the Vedas and also showing exclusive favour to these two divinities which is not so prominent in the epics. The other deities including Indra are no longer authorities for Hindu belief as a whole, they are special guide for separate and conflicting branches just to promote the authority and the worship of Viṣṇu and Śiva. The synonym of the Purāṇa is Panchalakshana (Amar Kosa, Amar Singh) and this has five characteristics topics which are:

1. Primary creation or cosmogony
2. Secondary creation or the destruction and renovation of worlds including chronology:
3. Genealogy of gods and patriarchs
4. Reigns of Manus or periods called Manvantaras
5. History, or such particulars as have been
   preserved of the princes of the solar and lunar
   races and of their descendants in modern times.

The origin of the Puranas is traced back to Vedas
and in some of the works of the Vedic and the early Buddhist
literature, the Purana has been called the fifth Veda. So
it is said that the Veda should be well amplified by means
of the Itihāsā and the Purāṇa. The Vedas means truth and
so purāṇas help in understanding the truth because the Purāṇas
were written to illustrate and expound the truth of the Vedas.
The Purāṇas have all along played an important role in the
development and formation of the social and religious life
of the Hindus. Moreover the Purāṇas attempt to provide historical
basis to the myths of Vedas and as such the divinities, the
religious concepts, social values and the customs, have undergone changes in Purāṇas giving more authenticity. It is observed that the concept of worship is found changed in the
Purāṇas and the supreme Vedic god Indra and others such as
Varuna, Vāyu, Agni have been surpassed by Viṣṇu and Śiva. So
discussions on Indra under this changed concept provide us
with some important revelations about this supreme Vedic
god.

There are numerous pointed and clear cut references
of Indra in Purāṇas and many of these have already been
mentioned in *Mahābhārata*. Basically the god functions in *Purāṇas* are similar to that of in the epic. Like *Mahābhārata*, *Indra*, in *Purāṇas* too, has lost his pre-dominant position to *Siva* and *Vishnu*. The *Purānic* age is also swayed by *Shakti* cult. But still *Indra* remains an important deity and like epic, here too, he is projected as a god capable of performing various deeds deemed suitable to his characteristic features only. *Indra* in various *Purāṇas* and also in minor or *Upa-Purāṇas* would be discussed in the following pages.

*Indra* is termed as a king of gods or *Devaraja* as evident from *Vishnu Purāṇa*. When *Prithu* was appointed the king of the earth, the great father of the spheres established sovereignty in other parts of the creation. *Soma* was appointed monarch of the stars and planets, of *Brahmans* and of plants, of sacrifices and of penance. *Vaisravana* was made king over kings; and *Varuna* over waters. *Vishnu* was the chief of the *Adityas; Pavakar* of the *Vasus; Daksha*, of the patriarchs; *Vasava* of the winds. To *Brahmatada* was assigned dominion over the *Deityas* and *Bāṇavas*; and *Yama*, the king of Justice, was appointed the monarch of the *Manes* (*Pitras*). *Airāvata* was made the king of elephants; *Garuda*, of the birds; *Indra* of *Uschaisravas* gods. *Uschaisrava* was the chief of horses. This is a very interesting account which reveals certain important features. *Indra*'s elephant is known as *Airāvata* and his horse who was created at the time of the churning of the ocean is known as *Uschaisrava*. These two, in *Purāṇas*, have been given due
honour by elevation to the positions of king of the elephants and the chief of the horses respectively. Moreover, Garuda who, in epics, was born on account of Indra only and whom Indra could not harm with his Vajra while he was bringing Amṛta from heaven, has been honoured in Purāṇas too. And as usual Indra retains his position as the king of the gods.

Indra’s appearance in Purāṇas is that of a fair man riding on his favourite white horse or his four tusked elephant carrying the thunderbolt or Vajra in his hand. Number of epithets of Indra are found in the Purāṇas. They are Akhandala, Divaspati, Gotrabhīd, Mahāvā, Marutvān, Meghavāhana, Purandara, Puruhūta, Abhūkṣa, Sācepāti, Śakra, Satākratu, Sahāsakṣa, Vṛtraha, Vṛṣa, Uṛdhvāra, Vāsava.

Indra is known as the husband of Śaci. He also finds account of Indrāni, the wife of Indra in Bhāgavata Purāṇa. Indrāni occupies a seat in the court of Indra. Indra got Jayanta and two other sons from Indrāni. Indrāni is referred as the power of Indra. When once Kṛṣṇa and Satyabhāma visited Amaravati, in order to kill Nāraka who created havoc in the heaven, then Indrāni welcomed them.

In Matsya Purāṇa, Indra is projected as a Lokāśala. He is always burning with lustre and full of valour.

"Nyāsamātrānato vākṣyo lokapūrātākānīha, Indrāstū Sahasā Ṛiptah sarvaḍāveshpī mahān, Vajraḥasto mahāsativaṃstasmai nityam namo nāmaḥ".

Here Indra is admired to a great extent and praised much with regards.
The celestial city of Indra, the Amāravati, remains as beautiful as was in epic age. The Purāṇas refer to Amāravati in a lucid way. The ever famous and the pleasant park Nandana, which is the abode of charming forests and gardens, is located here. The birds and the black bees sing musical notes. The trees are always full of evergreen and tasty fruits and flowers. The beautiful nymphs of the city are engaged in watersports thus providing a beautiful sight. The ponds of the garden are full of lotuses and many aquatic birds like swan, ducks, goose etc. The sacred river Ganges covers it from all sides and also high walls on which are arranged all the fields of battle. The doors are made of gold, gates of crystal and highways are well arranged. It is a very planned city with proper sitting places, courtyards and by lanes. The crossings of the four streets are adorned with altars made of jewels. The ladies of the cities are remarkably youthful and beautiful. The cool breezes blowing all the time makes it the most pleasant city. The singing hymns of peacocks, pigeons and other birds and also the Mṛdanga, conch, drum, dundubhi, Vina, Muraja and flute set alongwith the dancing of the Gandharvas, have made this as one of the most beautiful and pleasant city. This beautiful celestial city of Indra is situated in Puskaradvipa, which is bound on all sides by Ocean. In this dvipa is located the seat of Indra in a huge golden lotus with ten thousand golden petals. Thus Indra is known as the lotus - seated deity. The famous Purānic mountain, the Manasottara, which is ten thousand yojanas in width and height is located
here. 7A we also find references that this city of Indra was once occupied by Bali. Bali reigned here for a long time bringing three worlds under his control as the gods left the place under advice of Indra. 8 Indraloka is also referred to in Purana where one can only reach after performing number of rites and religious performances. 9 It is also mentioned that Indraloka is ruled by Purandara who is the lord of Sri. The thousand-eyed Indra is propitiated by the sages and the gods whom Indra bestows prosperity and wealth. 10 The house and the assembly of Indra (Indrasabha) is also mentioned. 11

Vajra is the unique weapon of Indra which no other god possessed. Puranas have described the Vajra in detail. When the gods could not meet the strength of Vrtra, they approached krsna for help and krsna advised them to request Dadhici, a sage, for his bones which had become firm and impenetrable due to austere ascetism and divine knowledge. Dadhici complied with the request of the gods and Visvakarma fashioned the Vajra or thunderboltf for Indra from the bones, and then onwards Vajra become a very powerful weapon for Indra. 12 It is also said that Tvaṣṭa fashioned the vajra for Indra. There is also another account of Indra's weapon in Skanda Mānas Purana, Viṣṇu said that Vrtra has become unassailable by any weapon other than that made from asthi or bones, and suggested Indra the type of bones to be used for fashioning Vajra. In reply to Indra's ignorance, he suggested the name of the sage Dadhici from whose bones the Vajra should be made.
for killing Vritra. Then Indra approached Dadhici and got
his thunderbolt fashioned from his bones. In analysing the
origin of the elements, senses and divinities, the Puranas
have put forward a unique philosophy which has also been
incorporated in Sankhya darshan and here Indra is also associ­
ated. In each several elements resides its peculiar rudiment,
thence the properties of tattva (type of rudiment) is
ascribed to these elements. Rudimental elements are not endowed
with qualities, and therefore they are neither soothing, nor
terrific, not stupefying. This is the elemental creation,
proceeding from the principles of egotism affected by foulness;
and the ten divinities proceed from egotism affected by the
principle of goodness; as does mind which is the eleventh. The
organs of senses are ten; of the ten five are the skin, eye,
nose, tongue and ear; the object of which combined with intellect,
is the apprehension of sound and the rest the organs of excita­
tion and perception; the hands, the feet and the voice, form the
other five. The Bhagavata which gives a similar statement of
the origin of the elements, senses and divinities, specifies the
last to be diś (space), air, the sun, Prachetas, the Ashwini,
fire, Indra, Upendra, Mitra, and Ka or Prajapati, presiding
over the senses according to the comments or severally over
the ear, skin, eye, tongue, nose, speech, hands, feet and excre­
tory and generative organs. So Indra is the presiding deity
or lord of the hands symbolically indicating a performer in
everybody and as such he is activity and life.
In Vīṣṇu Purāṇa, Indra is regarded as one of the Veda-Vyāsa. A nice dialect in this regard has been mentioned. In every Dvāra (or third) age, Viṣṇu, in the person of Vṛṣṇi, in order to promote the gods of mankind, divides the Veda, which is properly but one, into many portions observing the limited perseverance, energy and application of the mortals, he makes the Veda four fold, to adopt it to their capacities, and the bodily form which he assumes, in order to effect that classification, is known by the name of Vedavyāsa. Twenty eight times have the Vedas been arranged by the great Rishis in the Vaiśvāṃsvata Manvantara in the Dvārāga, and consequently eight and twenty Vāyūsas have passed away, by whom, in respective periods, the Veda has been divided into four. Indra is the eighth of the twenty eight Vyāsas, the first being Svayambu. So Indra is considered as a great scholar, wise and prudent. He is efficient enough to divide the Vedas and to interpret it. The supreme Vedic god emerges in a new role of dividing the Vedas.

Maruts, the gods of the storms are closely associated with Indra since Rgveda and subsequently in Rāmāyana. They had been the Chief aide of Indra in Vedic age assisting him in winning many battles. In Purāṇas too, the relation between the Maruts and Indra is depicted in a fascinating story.
The story is narrated below in brief.

All the sons of Diti were killed by Indra with the assistance of Visnu. Grief stricken Diti was determined to annihilate Indra and so she worshipped Kasyapa for a son capable of killing Indra. Kasyapa was pleased with her, promised her a boon, on which she prayed for a son of irresistible powers and valour who should destroy Indra. The great sage granted her the gift. She had solicited but with one condition. "You shall bear a son who will slay Indra, if with thoughts wholly pious, and person entirely pure, you carefully carry the baby in your womb for one year; In Visnu Purana it is one hundred years instead of one year.19 And the vow to be observed by Diti is also very difficult one as suggested by Kasyapa.

During the vow, Diti should not oppress any one, curse any creature, tell any lies. She should neither cut her nails nor hairs. She should not touch any inauspicious thing, bath in water, show anger, come in company of the wicked. She should not eat any food cooked by a sudra or touched by an woman in her monthly periods or polluted by ant. She should not take the remnants of meals or any flesh. She should drink water with joined palms. She should curb her speech or touch water before going out in the evening. Before going out, her body should not be uncleaned or uncovered or bare of ornaments or hair dishevelled. Regarding sleep, she should not lie down without washing her feet or head placed towards north or west or with any body else
or her body nude or during either of the twilights. She should worship the cows, Vipras Sri and Achutya after wearing washed garments and taking morning meals in a purified state of mind. She should worship the women whose husbands are alive with garlands, perfumes and ornaments. She should also serve her husband and think of him in her abdomen. Diti agreed to the condition and got impregnated by Kasyapa and started observing the vow in its right earnest and perspective. Indra, the ever intelligent and diplomatic god, came to know about the vow of Diti who happened to be his mother's sister. He was quite alarmed and decided to find a way for his life. Indra came to Diti and served and attended her with utmost humility such as presenting her flowers, fruits, roots, Kusa, grass, sacrificial fuel, leaves, earth water and many other things. Diti was very much satisfied while Indra had been looking for an opportunity to disappoint her intention. And at last opportunity came to him. One night Diti fell asleep without washing her feet and immediately Indra entered inside her week and pierced the embryo in seven places with his thunderbolt. The child thus mutilated, cried bitterly, and Indra repeatedly attempted to console and silence it in vain. The god became furious and again divided each of the seven portions into seven and thus formed the swift moving deities called Harutas (winds). They derived this appellation from the words with which Indra addressed them after piercing the child into seven pieces (Ma rodo, weep not) and they became fortynine subordinate...
divinities, the associates of Indra. The maruts were definitely forty nine in numbers. When the association of the Maruts with Indra is analysed from historical point of view, it may be presumed that Indra's mighty force was divided into seven divisions each under a general. The common name of these generals were Maruts. The Maruts were very first like wind, Indra and the Maruts were horse riders, used to wear helmets and metal jackets. The jacket was made from the gold of Jambu river. Afterwards, each division of Indrasena was further sub-divided into seven division thus forming forty nine divisions. It is revealed from Vayu Purana that Maruts originally belonged to the class of demons and Indra allowed them to join his army. Indra said that these Maruts, although demons, are god blessed and divine in nature, so are entitled to sacrifices. In Vayu Purana it is also mentioned that Diti requests Indra to give to Maruts the rank of gods and they should move among the gods.

As in epics, the Puranic Indra is always afraid of any one performing sacrifices or observing austerity and penances. In king Sagar's Asvamedha sacrifice, Indra stole the sacrificial horse and created illusions in the minds of Sagar's sons. He sends cupid Madana to disturb Nara but failed. Similarly his nymphs, at his instance, tries to distract Markandeya in vain. He disturbs Varengi's penance in the
disguise of a monkey or snake. Agni at the command of Indra tries to spoil the enjoyments of Mahadeva and Uma and Mahadeva cursed him to bear the fettus.

In Puranas, Indra appears proud and jealous at number of times. Once being very proud he did not bestow showers for a longtime in the kingdom of Rsabha, the son of Nabhi. Rsabha was a great ascetic and made his own kingdom Abja which was always flooded with showers of rains. Finding him superior, Indra got celestial nymph, Jayanti, married to Rsabha. Cyavana allowed Asvins to drink soma Jule which infuriated Indra and he took up his Vajra but could not harm to him on account of his austere penance and ultimately yielded before him.

The Puranas also reveals Indra's incurring curses of the sages at number of times. Once the great sage Durvasa, a part of Siva, received a beautiful, fragrant garland from a nymph of the air. Finding Indra, the king of gods, seated on his elephant Airavata and accompanied by other gods, he offered the garland to Indra. Indra, then suspended it on the brow of Airavata but the intoxicated elephant threw the garland in the ground and this infuriated Durvasa, because he found it total disrespect and dishonour to him by Indra. He cursed Indra that his excessive pride would ruin his kingdoms as well as his valour and energy. Being alarmed, Indra descended from the elephant and prayed to the sage for mercy. But Durvasa remained adamant in his curse. As a result Indra
lost all his valour and energy along with the three worlds. The plants, all vegetable products all herbs were withered and died. Indra was deprived of prosperity and ultimately he was defeated by the demons in a war. 32

Another time, Indra, in the company of Indrani did not honour his perceéptor Bhaskari and later being insulted deserted Indra. Then Indra appointed Visvarupa as his perception on Brahmu's advice. But he found that all the offerings and oblations offered by him to Visvarupa went to the Asuras. Indra became furious and beheaded Visvarupa. Thus Indra committed Brähmanicide and after observing penances was freed from this sin. 33

The traditional rift between Indra and Vṛtra which originated in Vedas continues unabated in epic as well as in Puranas. Only the character of Vṛtra gets changed in epics and Puranas. In Puranas Vṛtra is held in very high esteem. He is a Brähmana of eminent virtue and of austre penances. Initially Indra was lost to Vṛtra and then with the help of Visnu Indra killed Vṛtra by the vajra fashioned by Tvaṣṭa from the bones of Dadhici, a sage. Indra, in order to kill Vṛtra, also took the help of deception. On account of Brähminicide, Indra suffered a lot. This story is almost same as that told in Mahābhārata. 34

But the past life of Vṛtra has been properly explained in Puranas. Vṛtra, a great ascetic, was born as an Asura by
the curse of Parvati. Vṛtra was emperor Citraketu, king of Sūrasena, and had an enviable personality, wisdom, prudence and intelligence and he was very prosperous too. To get rid of the sin of Brāhmaṇicide of killing Vṛtra Indra performs penance for hundred years and worships Śiva and Parvati.

The sage Durvāśa's curse on Indra generates another story of Devasura struggle, and which also leads us to believe that Indra's position is relegated at Puranic age, and he is unable to win battles without the assistance of Viṣṇu or Śiva. The fatal curse of Durvāśa deprived Indra of his valour, energy and prosperity. At this opportune moment, the Dānavas attacked the god and overcame them. Indra and the other gods approached Brahmā for help. On Brahmā's direction they prayed and worshipped Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu advised them to make a treaty with the Asuras with a view to churning the ocean for Amṛta and Viṣṇu would ensure that the Asuras should not get their share of Amṛta. Accordingly, the gods and the asuras together churned the ocean with the mountain Mandara as the churning stick and the serpent Vasuki for the rope. During churning of ocean, number of things were found. Of which sprang the celestial Pārijata tree which afterwards leads to a confrontation between Indra and Kṛṣṇa. On churning the ocean, Amṛta was found and the gods drank their share which gave them immortality and endless vigour. But Viṣṇu deceived the Asuras and they did not get the desired Amṛta. Asuras became furious and took up various arms against the gods and a fierce battle took place.
commander-in-chief of the army of the Asuras. Indra led the army of the gods, after being infused with great powers, on drinking Amrta. He mounted on his pride elephant Airavata. Bali struck Indra, his sarathi, his elephant and his protectors with ten, one, three and four arrows respectively. But Indra returned those with his Javeline. Bali's Sakti, mace, passa and Rati were also destroyed by Indra. Then Bali took the help of demonic power and created illusion which resulted in a huge mountain covering the celestial army. Heavy and dark clouds, enormous numbers of serpents and hundreds of demons holding maces in their hands started destroying the celestial army. Indra approached Hari for help and with Hari's help Bali was defeated. Another Asura, Jambha, started fighting with Indra and injured his elephant. With another elephant supplied by Matali, Indra cut the head of Jambha. Then Namuci, Bala and Paka arrived at the battle field and caused damage to Indra, Indra's Sarathi and his steeds. Indra killed Bala and Paka. Namuci discharged an iron mace at Indra and Indra struck him with his Vajra. But no sooner had the vajra become futile for Namuci then Indra heard a voice which said that Namuci could not be crushed by wet or dry thing. Then Indra cut off the head of Namuci with the help of sea foam which is neither dry nor wet. Indra emerged victorious and all the gods and the sages praised and garlanded him. 38

Bali after being defeated by Indra was revived by Sukracarya, the preceptor of the Asuras. Bali also performed
Visvajit sacrificed and attacked Indra's kingdom. Indra was frightened and on the advice of his preceptor Bhagapati, left the heaven along with other gods and disappeared. Bali then performed one hundred sacrifices and attained the status of Indra. Subsequently Hari was incarnated as Vāmana (dwarf) Avatāra and snatched all the three worlds from Bali and again made Indra the king of the heaven.

The mountains used to move from one place to another and so to stabilise the mountains on earth as he did in vedic age in Purāṇa too, Indra clipped the wings of the mountains.

Indra is also born as Gadhi. Kusumbha, the son of Kusa being desirous of a son, engaged himself in devout penance to obtain one who should be equal to Indra. Observing the intensity of his devotion, Indra became alarmed and did not wish some one to be borne like him and determined to take upon himself the character of Kusumbha's son. So he was also borne as Gadhi. Kusumbha is a descendant of Pururavas dynasty.

Indra very diplomatically and tactfully deceives Diti by piercing her embryo into forty nine pieces thus preventing his own destruction. But in another occasion Indra was rescued by the intervention of Brahma and Kasyapa. Diti once again desired to have a son who would be superior to Indra in might. So she approached her husband and observed devout penances for ten thousand years and got a son named Vajranga. This son of Diti reached heaven and kicked Indra up at her mother's command,
and also brought him to his mother. At this juncture Brahma and Kasyapa came and requested Vajranga to release Indra as an insult is more than death for Indra. Accordingly Vajranga released Indra. 43

The Puranas have got definite historical origin and background. The worship of Indra in Puranic age remains incomplete unless Manavantaras and their relations with Indra are considered and discussed. Fourteen Indras have ruled over the fourteen Manavantaras. Seven of these Manavantaras have passed and seven are still to come. Most of the Puranins have given the accounts of Manavantaras and their respective Indras. 44

Seven Rishis, certain (secondary) deities, Indian Manu and the Kings his sons, are created and perish at one period, and the interval, called a Manavantara, is equal to seventy one times the number of years contained in the four yugas, with some additional years. This is the duration of the Manu, the (attendant) deities, and the rest, which is equal to 352,000 divine years, or to 306,720,000 years of mortals, independent of the additional period. Fourteen times this period constitute a Brähma day, that is, a day of Brahma; the term Brähma being the derivative form. At the end of this day a dissolution of the universe occurs, when all the three worlds, earth and the regions of space, are consumed with fire. The dwellers of the Maharloka (the region inhabited by the saints who survive the world), distressed by the heat, repair
then to Janaloka (the region of holy men after their
decease), when the three worlds are but one mighty ocean,
Brahmā, who is one but Nārāyana, satiate with the demolition
of the universe, steeps upon his serpent bed contemplated,
the lotus born, by the ascetic inhabitants of the Janaloka –
for a night of equal duration with his day; at the close
of which he created snow. Of such days a night is a year of
ātāma composed; and a hundred such years constitute his
whole life, one Parādāhā, or half his existence, has expired,
terminating with the Nahā Kalpa termed padma. The kalpa (or
day of Brahmā) termed varāha is the first of the second
period of Brahmā’s existence. 45 Years of the gods in the
four ages can be computed as below:

| Yuga          | Years of Gods | Years of Mortals
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kāta yuga</td>
<td>4800</td>
<td>1,728,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treta yuga</td>
<td>3600</td>
<td>1,296,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwāpara yuga</td>
<td>2400</td>
<td>864,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kali yuga</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>432,000</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>3,329,000</td>
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</tbody>
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All together, when added comes to 12,000. If these divine
years are connected into years of mortals, by multiplying
them by 360, a year of man being a day of the gods, we obtain
the years of which the yugas of mortals are respectively said
to consist –

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Gods x 360</th>
<th>Years of Mortals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4800 x 360</td>
<td>1,728,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>3600 x 360</td>
<td>1,296,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>2400 x 360</td>
<td>864,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1200 x 360</td>
<td>432,000</td>
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4,329,000 a Mahāyuga.

The notion of four ages in a deteriorating series
expressed by descending arithmetical progression, as 4, 3, 2, 1;
the conversion of units into thousands. Each of these yugas is preceded and followed by sandhyās containing a tenth of the period of the Yuga. A 1000 caturyugas (1000,4320,000 human years) are equivalent to a day or night of Brahma which is called a Kalp. Each Kalpa comprises the period of 14 Manus, each of whom presides over 71 caturyugas as stated above. The name of each Manavantara is given according to the name of the Manu, the first human being from whom the creation in a particular Manavantara starts. The first Manu was Svayambhuva and its Indra was Yajña; then came Aуттами with Susanti as its Indra; then came Rama with Sivi as its Indra; then came Raivala with Vibhu as its Indra. These four Manus were all descended from priyavrata.

Chekāusa was the Manu of the sixth period with Manojva as its Indra. All these Manus have passed. The present Manu is Vaivasvata with Purandara as its Indra. The future Manus are Sāvarni with Bali as its Indra; then will come Daksha-Sāvarni with Adbhuta as its Indra; then will come Brahman-Sāvarni with Śanti as its Indra; then will come Dharma-Sāvarni with Vṛṣa as its Indra; then will come Rudra-Sāvarni with Ritubheka at its Indra; then will come Auchiya with Divaspati as its Indra. In the last or fourteenth Manu, the name of Manu will be Bhautya with Suchi as its Indra.

The Indras are the lords of gods and Manus, and their names differ in various Purāṇas. It is evident that in Purāṇas Indra is attributed with two completely opposite
characteristic features. In one hand he is the king of
gods and though relegated but still a powerful god. But
according to some scholars, Indra indicated only a title
and these fourteen Indras are the historical personages who
have attained and would be attaining the position and title
of Indra. Manu was the name of human representative of Indra.
The scholars more specifically say that Indra was the common
name of the kings of Ilabritakesa. The other name of Ilabri-
takesa was Swarga. Bali inspite of being an asura could
became an Indra. It may be possible that Aryans who came
first to Indra were ruled by a king named Indra. The repres­
entatives of king Indra known as Manu used to rule India.
The people under the command of Manu were known as Manav or
Munusya. Here the difference in god and man originated. In
Puranas it is stated that during the rule of Hiranayaksha,
the gods assumed the form of men and they sailed in India.
The descendants of Manu in India became very powerful. They
maintained some sorts of relationships with the Indras of
Ilabritakesa. So anthropomorphism of Indra is complete in
Puranas.

Whether in Puranas Indra was a god or a man, but he
used to have a status of a king. Indra, being the lord of
each Manavantara, covers the past, present and future. Vayu
Purana gives a nice general description about the Indras of
the Manavantaras. They all live in past, present and future,
and thus are the lords of time. They are thousand eyed and
powerful. Vajra is their chief weapons. They are all powerful because of their lustre, tapas, intellect and strength. These Indras are the perceivers, protectors, kings and manus. They are Lokanathas because they protect the world. Manifesting the principles of Dharma, they protect all beings. Basically Indra stands as a symbol of supreme force of the universe.

That Indra is regarded as king of the gods, even indispensable to the supreme Trinity divinity in the Puraic age becomes apparent from his encounter with Prthu. Initially Prthu was honoured and presented with a crown by Indra himself. When Prthu resolved to perform one hundred horse sacrifices in order to become equal to Indra, Indra became jealous and stole the sacrificial horse of Prthu. At first Prthu’s son tried to prevent Indra from stealing the horse but failed to Indra’s wits. Knowing this Prthu became enraged and aimed his arrows at Indra. At this time the Rtviks prevented him and Brahma appeared before Prthu and revealed the true self of Indra. Brahma informed Prthu that Indra himself is the sacrifice worshipped by all other divinities. Indra is the incarnation of the supreme one. Since Prthu already is equal to Indra, so no more sacrifice by him is required and that is why Indra has but obstacles to Prthu’s one hundred sacrifices. Brahma also warned Prthu not to perform any more sacrifice. Here both Prthu and Indra are identified as parts of the supreme being. At the intervention of Brahma, Prthu embraced and touched the feet of Indra and apologised for wrong doings.
it is clearly revealed that one mortal king whatever great
his might may be, can not challenge the authority of Indra
because Indra is not alone, rather all along he is conceived
as the king of the divinities by Brahma and the others.

In number of occasions, Indra’s power was curbed to
a great extent and to regain his kingdom he had to depend
on some other deities or his spiritual preceptor Brhaspati.
In the story of Raji’s son and Indra, Indra lost all his power
and was deprived of the sacrifices. He was virtually relegated
to the status of a beggar as he begged a morsel of butter
from Brhaspati. Indra was the most powerful god in ancient
times and though worshipped still, he occupies a very inferior
position in the present age. As learned from the teaching of
later books, his rule over the gods continues for a hundred
divine years; at the expiration of which time he may be super-
seeded by another god or even by a man. The Puranas teach that
in each age of the world, a different being has enjoyed the
position. In Visnu Purana we find the following story of a
man raising himself to the throne of Indra.

There was a war between the gods and the demons; both
parties asked Brahma that who would be emerged victorious.
Brahma replied “The side for which Raji (an earthly king)
shall take up arms”. The demons first approached Raji for
his help Raji promised to do so provided he is made their
Indra or king. But the demons could not promised them because
their king’s term was yet to expire. When gods requested for
his help, the same condition was proposed and the gods accepted. Raji became their Indra. He fought for them and defeated the demons. Upon this Indra bowed before him, and placing Raji's foot upon his head said "Thou hast preserved me from a great danger, I acknowledge thee as my father; thou art king over all; I am thy son". Raji, however, was content to remain as king on earth and appointed Indra to continue as his representative on the throne of heaven. On the death of Raji, his sons wished to assume the position their father had declined. Indra opposed to this idea and at last was compelled to give in. After a time, being sad because deprived of his share in the sacrifice of the mortals, Indra met with his spiritual perceptor Brhaspati and asked him for a morsel of the sacrificial butter. The teacher replied that had Indra approached him earlier he would not have been reduced to such straits but "as it is" he said "I will regain your sovereignty in a few days." Upon this he performed a sacrifice with a special purpose of obtaining power for Indra. The result was that Raji's sons were led into sins, they became enemies of Brahmanas, despised the Vedas and neglected their religious duties. When thus weakened Indra fell upon and slew them and again occupied his throne.52

The position of Indra as Puranas remains in complete unless his association which may be a type of love and hate relationship with Krsna, the incarnation of Visnu, is considered. In all the major Puranas there are number of stories
relating to those two, one being the supreme Vedic god and the other being the most powerful incarnation of Visnu who has created a permanent effect on the history of mankind since his appearance, and who was also the most powerful character in epics too. Their stories certainly reveal number of allegories which restructure the position of the gods in Puranas. Indra was the most important god of the epics and Puranas and people used to propitiate him, offer sacrifices and oblations to him and perform yajñas in honour of Indra. So Indra was one of the most popular divinity and Vasudeva Krsna appeared at the scene and made attempts to relegate Indra to an inferior position to him. However, this tussle was originated in epics and it was mentioned in Puranas. The battle between the gods headed by Indra on one hand and Arjuna and Krsna on the other hand at the time of burning of Khāṇḍa forest and subsequent defeat of Indra at the hands of Arjuna is told in Puranas. In this incident, Arjuna took the active part in the battle assisted and guided by Krsna or rather we may say Krsna led Arjuna to defeat Indra. But direct confrontations between these two divinities had also taken place particularly in the two instances; once while Krsna put a stop to Indra Yajña or Indra festival and in another occasion when Indra was involved in a combat with Krsna contending for a Parijāta tree. These stories are described in number of Puranas.

Initially they start with enmity and rivalry but ultimately finds it suitable to become friends.
In an autumn season when Indra festival begins,

Krishna returning to Vraja found that cowherds were engaged for a sacrifice to be offered to Indra and by curiosity he asked them that what festival of Indra was going to be held in which they were taking so much pleasure. His father Nanda narrated him the importance of Indra i.e., he, being the rain god, is responsible for farming and subsequent animal rearing and as such after each rainy season all the princes offer sacrifices to Indra for his grace and benevolence. But Krishna thought otherwise and explains to the elders that on the basis of their occupation Indra should not be worshipped as their deity rather mountain on whom they are dependent should be pleased and worshipped. The elders who were the ardent followers of Krishna happily accepted the proposal and rejected Indra festival and worshipped mountains in turn.

On hearing this Indra became furious because this was a direct challenge to his might and kingship, he immediately called one of his attendant clouds called Samartaka and asked him to rain heavily on Vraja as because they had stopped giving offerings to him in Indra festival. The cloud roared as if Indra's lightning strikes and everyone on earth became scared of Indra. But at this moment Krishna, the reincarnation of Vishnu, held the mountain Gobardhana on his head thus preventing the rains to fall on the people and foiling the attempts of Indra who tried to terrorise the people of the earth for propitiating him. Indra had all the kingly qualities and on seeing Krishna more powerful than him he descended
to Gokula and urged Krsna to make him a friend and conferred him two names Govinda and Surabhi. Indra's intelligence also knows no bounds. He simultaneously requested him to befriend Arjuna, his son, so that Krsna and Arjuna can help each other at the time of need. Indra also felicitated Krsna. Krsna accepted Indra as his friend and they mutually embraced each other.

In Puranas we find a transformation of power of gods. Indra who was all powerful in Vedic era remains no longer the same in Puranas. Instead Vasudeva Krsna emerges as the main God. We also come to know this phenomenon from the story of Narakas, Krsna and Indra. Indra once, on his airavata came to Dwarka and praised Krsna on his various activities such as killing of Kansa, Putana, Dhanuka etc. and told him their plight, Narakas, the son of the earth, had caused great injuries to them; he had snatched the umbrella of Varuna, the Jewel mountain crest of Mandara, the celestial nectar dropping earrings of his mother Aditi and now he demands the elephant airavata. On hearing so, Krsna reached svarga and slew Narakas. After slaying Narakas, Satyabhama, wife of Krsna was charmed by the exquisite beauty of the Parijata tree and desired to possess the same at Dwarka, so Krsna took the Parijata tree. But this, being the personal property of Sati, the wife of Indra, Indra in order to defend the Parijata tree attacked Hari with his thunderbolt. But Krsna defeated all the gods in the war and ultimately not to secure the wrath of the gods apologised to Indra and said

"Thou art Indra the king of the celestials, we are but mortals,
O Lord of the world, thou art pardoned therefore the offence that I have committed. I now return this Pārijātā tree. But in turn, Indra gives away the Pārijātā tree to Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa returns to Dwārakā and marries the princesses brought from Garga. 55

Another story already stated earlier, which was told in Mahābhārata has also been mentioned at length in Purāṇa. The battle between the gods led by Indra versus Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna. 55A When burning Khāṇḍava forest by Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna took place, the gods led by Indra attacked them. Even Indra's pouring rains failed to stop the fire. Ultimately he lost to Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa but ultimately they befriended each other. Here Indra did not lost to two ordinary mortals but he was defeated by Kṛṣṇa and Nārāyaṇa. Vasudeva Kṛṣṇa's intervention in stopping the Indra festival of Vṛindavaṇa is also mentioned in Bhāgavata Purāṇa. 56

The important points of this episode are:

1) The preparation made by the cowherds and Nanda etc for Indrajyaṇa - history of this tradition

2) Kṛṣṇa's suggestion to them to make use of these very preparations for the worship of the cows, Bṛhadā and the mountains Gоварdhana - the history and evaluation of mountain-worship.

3) Indra's wrath caused by the insult and the falling of rain in consequence of it. The approach of all to Kṛṣṇa and his lifting the mountain, Gоварdhana, for the protection of all.
iv) Indra's admission of Krishna's victory and the latter being worshipped as the Indra of the cows (Govinda) by Surabhi, the mother cow and Indra.

Let us consider the first points. It is said that sacrifice to Indra is important because he is the god of rain and clouds. The reason for Indra worship is clear because prosperous life is associated with rain and thus with Indra. Nelson states that today no public worship of Indra is held and only the festival of this nature in the Hindu calendar is the 'Sakrāvajatthāna, the erection of a flag post in honour of Sakra or Indra. It is used to be celebrated for five days from the month of the bright half of the Bhadrapada to the twelfth (i.e. this is practically in the middle of the rainy season) for getting timely rain and general prosperity. Its Chief function was the erection of a post with a flag attached to it. For this purpose, a tall tree in a forest was felled for making a pole and was solemnly brought to the city. It was again removed to the forest on the last day. Wilson also remarked that 'Sakrāvajatthāna' is also a rite performed by the Kings and the princes. In the Mahābhārata, Indra gives a pole to King Vasa Uparichāra for victory. The king of Godi, Vasa Uparichāra, gave up arms and lived in a hermitage practising penance. Indra with other gods approached him to dissuade from ascetic penances. Indra presented to him aerial car, a triumphant garland of lotuses and bamboo pole. The pole the king planted on the ground for worshipping Indra. From that time all kings erect a staff with a flag.
in honour of Indra. According to the author of *Pratatsamhita*, it is Visnu who first presented the staff to Indra and Indra then presented it to the king Vasu Upariṣṭa. The standard is said to be prepared out of the lustre of Visnu, by it Indra defeated enemies. It was borne on a eight wheeled car as if it were the sun. There is also an account in the *Vishnu-dharmottara Purāṇa* showing how Visnu gave the banner Sakradhvaja to the gods to vanquish the enemies. The Indra-yajña i.e. sacrifice to Indra undertaken by the Gopas suggests same festivals in honour of India. Elsewhere, Indra is represented as having a yoke on his shoulder with curd and butter attached to one end and cakes to the other as seen by Kṣatras wife Upama prior to his victory. This probably refers to the worship of Indra in the form of a cowherd agriculturists and has possible relation to the 'Indra-yajña' of the Gopas. We only find one reference of Indra Yajña in Kalpaśutra where the householder is said to put the cakes (Apolpas) in the honour of Indra, Indrāni etc.

Krṣna made a stop to Indrayajña because he believed "By which one lives is one's deity." This is found also in *Vishnu Purāṇa*.

Regarding the third point, most probably the cult of mountains existed at the time of *Rg. Veda*. The mountains got associated with Visnu. Most of the cases mountains are related with some gods or semi-gods such as Kailāśa is the abode of lord of Siva. So the mountain were inherently the objects of
worship and as a second step, they became the seats of many popular gods. Such is the case of mount Meru where the gods sit in conference before undertaking the churning of the ocean. In the RgVeda, there is the idea of the moving mountains with Indra bringing them to halt. From the study of RgVeda it appears that mountains having wings. Most probably this theory of mountains having wings and flying from place to place is suggested from the hymns of RgVeda 11.12.2. But RgVeda does not give a clear cut picture of mountains having wings. It appears that enemies of Indra are closely associated with mountains as their fond resorts.

Indra’s annihilation of mountains means his subduing non-vedic cult of mountain spirits. By offering sacrifice to mountains Krishna overrode the older vedic gods such as Indra and establishing worship of mountain cult.

Krishna was involved in a confrontation with Indra because he wished to show that the supreme vedic god Indra can be conquered and thus new Shakti cult centering around him was established.

At the end of the incident, Indra and the Cow Surabhi declared Krishna to be the Indra of the Cows, brahmins and the righteous persons.

Other names given to Krishna were Upendra and Indravarajah (i.e. the younger brother of Indra); Krishna as the son of Devaki is Indra’s younger brother who is a son of Miti. If we consider the etymology of Govinda we would find that ‘Govind’ is finder.
or winner of the cows. In Rigveda Indra is known as 'Govinda', finder or winner of the cows. In Mahabharata, Garuda, after defeating Indra, is called Indra of the birds. The purpose of whole account of Krishna's clash with Indra seems to be the rise of Krishna to Indra's level.

So now it is clear that in the account of Gavardhana, there are two prominent traits. The sacrifice to Indra is the Vedic trait and the sacrifices to the mountains a non-Vedic faith. Against this background of the Vedic and the non-Vedic traits, the appearance of Krishna as the upholder of the mountains worship seems to be of particular importance because it, not only, gives support to the faith of mountains worship but also establishes Krishna as superior to Indra. In all these episodes and stories, it is observed that Indra is relegated to an interior position then compared with Visnu. But this relegation is also made on account of one important reason that is the Bhakti movement. The entire Puranic age and the divinities were restructured accordingly. Indra was the supreme Vedic god, centre of hymns, oblations and sacrifices and he was of indomitable spirit and courage readily fulfilling the desires of his worshippers. He was always eager to have maximum sacrifices. But the appearance of Visnu at Puranic age as the symbol of sustenance and the centre of propitiation certainly leads to a confrontation with Indra because the basic philosophies and doctrines behind their worship was quite different. But in this world, to prove Supremacy and greatness, one has to prove his
worth to charm and attract the people. So Krishna, the symbol of Visnu on earth, had to fight it out with Indra just to prove his supremacy. And to prove his credibility to the eyes of the people, who could have been a better challenger than Indra to be defeated? It is also creditable for Indra too, because time and again he dares challenging the supreme and the most powerful divinity of the age as he did in epics. It is also certain that Visnu is unable to continue his sustenance functions by creating permanent enmity with Indra and as such after every incidents, in the long run, these two gods befriend each other as they did in the vedic period.74

The inherent warrior character of Indra which originated at vedas and continued unabated in epics, is maintained in Puranas too. As stated earlier, his courageous battle against the Asuras after the Churning of the ocean, proves this aspect of Indra's nature. He also fights against Gayasura and Semi.76 In Vaman Purana, we find Kaittikaya was leading the soldiers of the gods, Visnu was at the rear, Indra at the centre, Jayanta at the left wing and Varuna at the right wing.77 Indra also took active part in fort fighting while the gods attacked the fort, Cripura of the asuras. Indra went to the east gate, Canda to the north, Yama and Kuvera to the west gate and Rudra to the south gate.78

Indra also used to break the mutually agreed code of conduct of the war whenever the war-situation became adverse.
When Indra was fighting Namuci, it was decided that no one would use any secret or poisoned weapon, wet or dry and during day time or night. Finding his skills unmatched to kill Namuci, Indra broke the code of conduct of war. When Namuci was in leisurely mood playing with sea water, Indra created some secret Vajra in the foams of that water and killed Namuci.  

79

As in Vedas Indra used to bestow number of favours to his worshippers Vijitāśava was honoured with the power of moving unseen by Indra, 80 as he did in case of Vasu Uparicara in Mahabhārata. 81 To make Kukutsthā victorious, Indra assumed the form of a bull and Kukutsthā used to ride on it and defeated the Asuras in the war. 82 Manohata was named Trasadasyu by Indra because Indra offered him his finger for sucking. 83 When Hariraghendra completed his Puṣuṣamodha, Indra offered him chariot. 84 Indra also offered half of his seat to Pururavas when the latter visited him, 85 Sukarmān, a manavantara lord was given boons by Indra, 86 The Vaiṣṇava tree, which became a bone of contention between Indra and Krishna, was given by Indra to Krishna. 87

88

In order to receive favours and boons from Indra, the propitiation of Indra becomes an important feature in the Purāṇas. The kings used to perform Indra-vrata for prosperity and wealth. 88 The observance of Indra-vrata helps one to the seat of Indra. 89 The performance of Indrayajña was also extremely popular among the people. Nanda and the other Gopas
used to perform Indrayajān every year after the rains.

Another important feature which prominently developed at Purānas is the image making and the image worship of the gods and goddesses where Indra occupies an important position. The images of Indra and his spouse Indrāni have been lucidly described in Matsya Purāṇa which reveals that worship of idols of Indra was popular at that time. Indra is portrayed as having one thousand eyes and seated on an elephant. He is with large chest, thighs and face and shoulders like that of a lion, big arms, a crown and earings. He holds the thunderbolt and is decorated with various ornaments and is worshipped by the gods, the nymphs and the gandharvas Damseas, holding the chouries, stand on the sides. Indra is seated on the throne which is being worshipped by the Gandharvas. On the left side of Indra is seated Indrāni with a lotus in hand. In another image of Indra she holds vajra, sula and gada in her hands like Indra, She is also seated on the back of the elephant and is having many eyes. She is adorned with divine ornaments and is of golden in colour.

Apart from Purānas as described above, numerous references of Indra are found in Upa-Purānas also which also reveal certain important aspects of Indra in the Purānic age. Indra in the Upa-Purānas has been deliberately considered because of their importance as records of the social and religious history of India from the Gupta period downward can by no means be overlooked.
Indra's name is referred in the story of Visvakarma's paring of the sun's rays by means of a lathe where Indra along with other gods and sages eulogized the sun when the demons became powerful with the boons of the sun, then Indra stood, under the name of Dandanayaka on the left side of the Sun and was engaged by the latter to rule over the world with his danda or sceptre and with niti or science of politics. So here Indra appears as inferior to Sun and he is assigned his Kingdom and rule over the world by Sun only.

Indra is mentioned as one of the Adityas and in the worship of Sun, Indra should be worshipped along with other atmospheric deities.

In Vismudharma Upapurana, a new account of Ambarisha and Indra is found when Ambarisha is engaged in austre penance, Visnu takes the form of Indra and wishes to test him. He desires to give a boon to the king but the king categorically states that he only wants to please Visnu. Even Indra wants to kill him with his thunderbolt, the king remains unmoved. Visnu comes out of the form of Indra. Indra also sends his nymphs Rambha, Tilottama and cupid (Smara, Madana) and spring (Vasanta) to distract the sages Nara and Narayana for fear of apprehension that they may occupy his kingdom. Indra also creates wolves, lions and tigers and with them he attempts to distract the sages by terrorising them.

So here, Indra appears to be very much concerned about his kingdom and kingship and it is also revealed that Indra's
kingdom can be occupied by means of austerity penance and tapas.

In Vismudharmotara, Indra's city is described and also Indra's residence in a lotus stalk in the Manasa lake for getting rid of Brahma hanyā arising from his slaying of Vṛtra is also mentioned. In a conflict with Gādānās, Indra's creation of a large number of highly pernicious beings called Grahas viz., gods, pitra, demons, Rakṣasas, evil spirits, Bhūtas etc for doing harm to Gādānās's life and Gādānās's creation of larger nos of similar Grahas named Skanda, Viṣṇa etc to counter the influence of those created by Indra lead to Indra's praise of Skanda and his worship. Indra severs the wings of the elephants and sends them to serve king of Nāga, Lomaḥśāla.

In Narasimha Purāṇa, the story of Indra's getting rid of his female form by muttering the mantra "Om Namo Narayana" is mentioned. In the same Upaniṣad Purāṇa, Indra son Jayanta and Indra's story relating to stealing of Citrasena, wife of Kuvera, is referred. In Devī-Purāṇa, Indra appears as a great scholar on different Vidyās which is evident from the fact that Chitrāngada received different Vidyās on Khaḍga, mālā, ānjana quitika etc from Indra, Indra from Brahmā, and Brahmā received the same from Śiva through Viṣṇu. Indra is also stated to be an exponent of Padamāla-vidyā along with other deities. Indra also appears as a disciple of Brahmā because the original Devi...
Purana was of ten lanes slokas as told by Siva to Brahma but subsequently Brahma abridged it to one lac slokas when he told this sastra to Indra.

Indra's killing of Visvarupa or Trisira created by Tvastra birth of Vrtra and his war against Indra and latter's defeat, Indra's treaty with Vrtra and his killing of him in the evening by means of a mass of foam containing the thunder as well as Visnu's energy, Tvastra's curse on Indra for Brahma - hatya and his residence in a lotus stalk in the Manasa lake for escaping from the sin, appointment of Nahusa in place of Indra and former's lust for Indra's wife Saci, Indra's escape from Brahma-hatyas by performing horse sacrifice and then meeting saci and defeat of Nahuṣa at the hands of Indra are vividly described in the Devi-Bhagabata Purana. The Mahabhaṭa Purana also describes a similar story. But here Indra gets rid of half of the sin arising out of Brahminicide by performance of horse sacrifice and then he is taken to the region of Mahakali by Siva for getting rid of the remaining part of the sin. As Siva helps Indra for expiating the sin, Indra also requests Mandana to unite Siva with Kali to kill the demon Taraka which Mandana does.

Mention of Indra and Indra's elephant, Airavata, is found in Brahadhārma Purana. Airavata was terrified by Ganga as he desired to enjoy her. Indra's elephant Airavata was beheaded by Nandi on Siva's instance and Indra gave a tusk to the son of Siva.
The reference of Indra worship is found in several Upa-Purāṇas. When Indra was defeated by a demon named Subala in the Bhuṣṭya Manvantara, then Viṣṇu gave him the powerful banner subsequently known as banner of Indra or Sakra-dhvaja which the kings praise at the hoisting of the banner.111 Proper this and the results of the worship of Indra Śaci along with other gods is also mentioned.112

Indra's banner is also mentioned in Viṣṇudharmopuṇāṇa.113 Indra's and Śaci's images are considered as equal to those of Viṣṇu and Lakṣami and so to be worshipped.114 In epics, it was Indra himself who advised the Cedi King Vasu Uparicara to worship his banner. But in Viṣṇudharmottara, Garga is said to have instructed the king Vasu on the method of worshipping the Sakra-dhvaja or banner of Indra.115

Indra, the most powerful favourite national god of the Vedic Aryan, continues to play vital roles in most of the Purāṇas and Upa-Purāṇas. The Puranic age is completely swayed by the movement of Bhakti and the god of hymns and sacrifices is surpassed by Viṣṇu or Śiva. The relegation of Indra starts from the later vedic period, continues unchanged in the Mahākāvyas and relegation of Indra to the secondary position of divinities is complete at Puranic age.

So, under the changed circumstances and limited scopes, Indra is still able to do justice to his name. In Purāṇas too, like Vedas and the epics, Indra is considered as the rain-god. He is worshipped for bestowing rains for
Another noteworthy feature of Indra is that his position as the king of the gods and the lord of the heaven remains unchanged. He is the unquestioned monarch of the gods and an ideal for the kings on the earth. But in Vedas Indra was unbeatable and was efficient enough to retain his position by virtue of his own might alone. There other divinities were associates of Indra and Indra was their celebrated leader. But in Puranas, this position gets changed. Here, to retain and regain his position, Indra, at times, needs the help of few superior divinities. In the long run he is not able to beat Bali and loses his throne to him. Then only Hari in the form of Vamana Avatara snatches the three world from Bali and confers the kingship to Indra.

The sons of Rajis not only beat and turn Indra away from the heaven, but also delineates him to the position of a beggar. Here his perceptor Brhaspati comes in rescue of Indra. So in Puranas, the most characteristic features of Indra, i.e. the valour, strength and might, have partially worn out and at number of times he requires the help of others. The traditional fight of Indra-Vrtra is prominently mentioned as in Vedas but only the characters of Vrtra stand changed. He appears as a pious and auspicious brahmin and the doctrine of Shakti movement places the brahmin in a higher position, even to Indra. He, being the king of the
gods, suffers a lot on account of brahminicide thus giving a teaching to the mortals.

The rebellious and the courageous characters of Indra never subsides though he himself is relegated. He dares to challenge the mighty Vasudeva Krishna, the incarnation of Vishnu on earth, fights with him and his associates. The in-born warrior nature of this supreme Vedic god never deters him from accepting a challenge whatever may be the consequences.

Indra also appears as a scholar, wise and sagacious. He is considered as one of the Vyasaas, capable of dividing and interpreting the Vedas. No doubt, this is a unique quality of Indra not found earlier.

As usual Indra is very much concerned about his seat and even he takes the birth as Gadi. Also he attempts to spoil the tapas and sacrifices of all only on account of this fear.

The anthropomorphism of Indra which originated in Vedas is almost complete in the Puranas. Indra here appears as more mortal than divine. His deeds and actions lead us to believe that Indra is not one god but the powerful kings ruling over the Manavantaras. So the character of Indra is so portrayed in the Puranas - that he may either be accepted as a god or as a human being, but if he is a mortal, then he is a super mortal capable, of doing miracles and wonders.
In spite of being relegated to the secondary ranks of gods, Indra's grace and glory remain shining. He leads the gods in all the wars, he appears to be the most daring and dynamic in confronting the enemies of the gods. He commits sins, suffers but the gods along with the Trinity divinities invoke him because he is the only and unchallenged lord of the gods. When he is defeated at the hands of Vajranga, Brahma comes in his rescue, as also in case of Kurthu-Indra-conflict. Most striking and interesting feature of Indra in the Puranas is his combat against the superior gods of that age, particularly with Vasudeva Krsna. Those struggles are nothing but symbolic where the old vedic culture is taken over by the new religious movement as Indra by Krsna. Moreover, the most powerful divinities and incarnation of Puranas have found in Indra, a great challenger, a mighty warrior and a glorious god, the defeat of whom paves the way for new religious consciousness led by the newer divinities. But they also can not do away with Indra, because it is certain that Brahma and Visnu may not be able to continue their creation and sustenance by creating permanent onenit with this powerful Vedic god. Rather the assistance, strength and the guidance of Indra is still essential for the benefit of the mankind and also for divinities. So on emerging victorious against
Indra, the most powerful, prudent, wise and shrewd character of the age, Vasudeva Krsna apologises to Indra and eulogises him "Thou art Indra the King of the celestials; we are but mortals, O Lord of the world, thou must pardon therefore the offence that I have committed. I now return this Vārijāta tree".
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