

# PROCEDURE OF MADHUPARKA FROM SŪTRAS AND DHARMAŚĀSTRAS

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## ABSTRACT

*The Madhuparka is offered to ṛtvika or priests when they are chosen for a sacrifice, to a snātaka who has come to one's house, to the king, to one's ācārya, father-in-law, paternal and maternal uncles. Manusmṛti III.120 says that a king and a snātaka are to be honoured with madhuparka only when they visit one's house in a yajña. On Yājñabalkyasmṛti I.109, Visvarūpa says that madhuparka is to be offered to the king only and not to any kṣatriya. Several Gṛhyasūtras describe madhuparka as a part of the marriage rite, while others like Āśvalāyana Gṛhyasūtra describe it independently. Others like Hiranyakeśi Gṛhyasūtra describe it as part of Samāvartana.*

**Keywords:** Madhuparka, arghya, Gṛhyasūtra, honey

## Introduction:

The word of Madhuparka literally means 'a ceremony in which honey is shed or poured'.<sup>[1]</sup> The *Nirukta*<sup>[2]</sup> refers to the usage of offering Madhuparka with the madhuparka repeated thrice. The *AitareyaBrāhmaṇas* says that if the ruler of men comes as a guest or anyone else deserving of honour comes, people kill a bull or a cow (that has contacted a habit of abortion) refers to Madhuparka,<sup>[3]</sup> though that word is not actually used. In all *Gṛhyasūtras* it is described at length. Most of the details are same, the main difference being that often different mantras are prescribed, though some are the same like the verse 'mātārudrāṇām'. The Madhuparka is offered to ṛtvika or priests when they are chosen for a sacrifice, to a snātaka who has come to one's house, to the king, to one's ācārya, father-in-law, paternal and maternal uncles.<sup>[4]</sup> The bride-groom, when he comes to the bride's house, is to be honoured with Madhuparka because he also is generally a snātaka. The ācārya is one who performs one's *upanayana* and teaches the Veda. The *MānavaGṛhyasūtra* I.9.1, *KhādīraGṛhyasūtra* IV.4.21, *Yājñabalkyasmṛti* I.110 say that six persons deserve Madhuparka (*arghya*) viz. ṛtvika, ācārya, the bride-groom, the *rājā*, the snātaka and a person who is dear to one. Some like *BaudhāyanaGṛhyasūtra* add 'Atithi or Guest'.<sup>[5]</sup> Vide *Dharmasūtra of Gautama* V.25, *ĀpastambaGṛhyasūtra* 13.19-20, *ĀpastambaDharmasūtra* 3.8.5-6, *BaudhāyanaDharmasūtra* II.3.63-64, *Manusmṛti* III.119. It is laid down that if the persons enumerated come to one's house within a year after madhuparka has been once offered, then it need not be offered again, but when a marriage is being celebrated in one's house or a yajña is being performed then madhuparka must be offered to those persons even if one year has not elapsed since the madhuparka was previously offered. *Dharmasūtra of Gautama* V.26-27, *ĀpastambaDharmasūtra* II.3.8.6, *Yājñabalkyasmṛti* I.110, *KhādīraGṛhyasūtra* IV.4.26, *GobhilaGṛhyasūtra* IV.10.26.

*Yājñabalkyasmṛti* I.110 says that Ṛtviks are to be honoured in each yajña, even though several yajñas are performed in the same year.<sup>[6]</sup> *Manusmṛti* III.120 says that a king and a snātaka are to be honoured with madhuparka only when they visit one's house in a yajña.<sup>[7]</sup> On *Yājñabalkyasmṛti* I.109, Visvarūpa says that madhuparka is to be offered to the king only and not to any kṣatriya. Medhātithi on *Manusmṛti* III.119 says that when a king, whether a kṣatriya or not, comes to one's place madhuparka was to be offered, but not to śūdra king. According to Gṛhya prarīṣiṣṭa the madhuparka is to be performed according to the rites prescribed in the śākhā of the receiver and not of the giver.<sup>[8]</sup>

The procedure of madhuparka is set out from the *ĀśvalāyanaGṛhyasūtra* I.24.5-26 " He pours honey into curds or clarified butter if no honey can be had." A seat, water for washing the feet, *arghya* water, water for ācamana, honey mixture, a cow; every one of these they announce three times.<sup>[9]</sup> The person to be honoured should sit down on the seat made of northward pointed darbha grass with the verse "I am the highest one among my kindred, as the sun among lightings. Here I tread on whomsoever bears enmity to me." Or he should repeat this verse after he has trodden on it. He should make the host wash his feet; the right foot he should hold out first to a brāhmaṇa for washing and the left to a śūdra. When his feet have been washed, he receives the *arghya* water in his joined hands and then the perform ācamana with the water for sipping with the formula 'thou art the seat or first layer of ambrosia.'<sup>[10]</sup>

He should look at the madhuparka, when it is being brought to him, with the mantra 'I look at the with the eye of Mitra'. He accepts the madhuparka in the joined hands with the formula 'by the command (urging) of

god Savitr, by the arms of Aśvins and the hands of Pūṣan, I accept thee'.<sup>[11]</sup> He looks at it with the three ṛk verses 'the winds blow honey to the righteous man'.<sup>[12]</sup> He (takes it into his left hand), stirs it about thrice from left to right with the thumb and the finger next to the smallest and wipes (his fingers) towards the east with the formula 'may the Vasus eat these with the Gāyatrī metre'; with the formula 'may the Rudras eat thee with the Tristubh metre' (he wipes fingers) towards the south; with the formula 'may the Ādityas eat thee with the Jagatī metre' towards the west; with the formula 'may Viśve Devas eat thee with the Anuṣṭubh metre' towards the north; with the formula 'to the bhūtas (beings) thee' he three times takes (some of the madhuparka materials) from out of the middle of it and throws it up. He should partake of it for the first time with the formula the milk of Virāj art thou, for the second time with 'may I obtain the milk of Virāj', the third time with 'in me may the milk of PadyāVirāj dwell'.<sup>[13]</sup> He should not eat the whole madhuparka and should not eat to satiety. He should give the remainder (out of the madhuparka materials) to a brāhmaṇa towards the north; but if no brāhmaṇa is available he should throw it into water, or he may eat the whole. He then takes ācamana with the water intended for it with the formula 'thou art the cover of ambrosia'.<sup>[14]</sup> He sips water a second time with the formula 'truth! Fame! Fortune! may fortune resort to me'. When he has sipped water, they announce to him the cow. Having muttered the words 'destroyed is my sin, my sin is destroyed', he says 'om, do it' if he desires to have the cow killed; if he is desirous of letting her go, he mutters the verse 'the mother of Rudras and daughter of Vasus and says 'let her go'. "Let the madhuparka not be without flesh".

A few small matters may be noted. Several Gṛhyasūtras describe madhuparka as a part of the marriage rite, while others like Āśvalāyana Gṛhyasūtra describe it independently. Others like Hiranyakeśi Gṛhyasūtra describe it as part of Samāvartana.<sup>[15]</sup> There is divergence about the substances mixed in offering madhuparka. Āśvalāyana Gṛhyasūtra and Āpastamba Gṛhyasūtra<sup>[16]</sup> prescribe a mixture of honey and curds or clarified butter and curds. Others like Pāraskara Gṛhyasūtra I.3 prescribe a mixture of three curds, honey and butter. Āpastamba Gṛhyasūtra 13.11-12 states the view of some that those three may be mixed or five (those three with fried yava grain and barley). Hiranyakeśi Gṛhyasūtra I.12.10-12 gives the option of mixing three or five (curds, honey, ghee, water, and ground grain). The Kauśika sūtra 92 speaks of nine kinds of mixtures viz. Brāhma (honey and curds), Aindra (of pāyasa), Saumya (curds and ghee), Pauṣṇa (ghee and mantha), Sārasvata (milk and ghee), Mausala (wine and ghee, this being used only in Sautrāmaṇīand Rājasūya sacrifices), Vāruṇa (water and ghee), Rāvāna (sesame oil and ghee), Pārvirājaka (sesame oil and oil cake).

### Conclusion:

The Mānava Gṛhyasūtra I.9.22 says that the Veda declares that the madhuparka must not be without flesh and so it recommends that if the cow is let loose, goat's meat or pāyasa may be offered, the Hiranyakeśi Gṛhyasūtra I.13.14 says that other meat should be offered, Baudhāyana Gṛhyasūtra I.2.51-54 says that when the cow is let off, the flesh of a goat or ram may be offered or some forest flesh may be offered, as there can be no madhuparka without flesh or if one is unable to offer flesh one may cook ground grains. As the cow became sacred, it became unthinkable to kill her and so other flesh was offered. When even flesh-eating came to be abhorred, then only pāyasa and such other things were recommended. The Ādiparva 60.13-14 refers to Janamejaya's reception of Vyāsa with the madhuparka and Vyāsa's letting the cow loose. This abhorrence of flesh-eating will be dealt with later on. In modern times there is generally no madhuparka except in marriage and then too it is a simple matter and the elaborate procedure prescribed in some of the gṛhya sutras is hardly ever followed.

### References:

1. तं होवाच किं विद्वान्नो दालभ्यानामन्य मधुपर्कं पिवसीति- जैमिनीय उपनिषद् ब्राह्मण 18.4.
2. जानते मधुपर्कं प्राह । - निरुक्त 1.16.
3. तद्यथैवावो मनुष्यराज आगतेऽन्यस्मिन्वाहति उक्षाणं वा वेदतं वा क्षदन्ते। - ऐतरेय ब्राह्मण III.4.
4. ऋत्विजे वृत्वा मधुपर्कमाहरेत्। स्नातकायोपस्थिताया। राजे च। आचार्यश्चशुरपितृव्यमातुलानां च। आश्रलायनगृह्यसूत्र I.24.1-4.
5. तथैवे अर्घ्यं ऋत्विक् श्वशुरः पितृव्यो मातुल आचार्यो राजा वा स्नातकः प्रियो वरोऽतिथिरिति।- बौधायनगृह्यसूत्र I.2.65.
6. प्रतिसंवत्सरं त्वर्घ्याः स्नातकाचार्यपार्थिवा। प्रियो विवाहश्च तथा यज्ञं प्रत्युत्विजः पुनः॥ -Yājñabalkyasmṛti I.110.
7. राजा च श्रोत्रियश्चैव यज्ञकर्मण्युपस्थितौ। मधुपर्केण संपूज्यौ न त्वयज्ञ इति स्थितिः॥-Manusmṛti III.120.
8. वरस्य या भवेच्छाखा तच्छाखागृह्यचोदितः। मधुपर्कः प्रदातव्योऽप्यन्यथाखेपि दातरि॥-quoted in संस्कारप्रकाश page no 823.
9. अर्घ्यं is water for washing the hands in which flowers and perfume like sandal-wood paste have been mixed up. गन्धमाल्यादिसंयुक्तमुदकमर्घ्यमित्युच्यते।- Nārāyaṇa on Āśvalāyana Gṛhyasūtra I.24.11.
10. The words अमृतोपस्तरणमसि occur in the description of मधुपर्कं in Āpastamba Gṛhyasūtra 13.13.
11. Vājasaneyā Saṁhitā I.24.

12. The three verses R̥gveda I.90.6-8 all begin with the word मधु 'मधु वाता ऋतायते मधु क्षरन्ति सिन्धवः ' (6)'मधु नक्तमुतोषसो'(7)'मधुमात्रो वनस्पतिः'(8) and so are very appropriate to मधुपर्क. They occur inVājasaneyā Saṁhita 13.27-29 are called मधुमती verses and employed.
13. Pāraskara Gṛhyasūtra I.3.
14. Āpastamba Gṛhyasūtra 13.13.
15. Hiranyakeśi Gṛhyasūtra I.12-13.
16. Āpastamba Gṛhyasūtra 13.10.

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