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ABSTRACT OF PAPER

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**TITLE : Expiatory Rites according to *Baudhāyana* and *Vādhūla* School**

It is natural that some lapses or wrongdoing or violations of prescribed norms and procedures by persons engaged in ritual practices may occur. The act of such mistakes is believed to harm the desired fruit of the rites and rituals. To save the sacrificer from such harm *prāyaścittas* 'expiatory rites' have been prescribed in the holy texts. In respect of Vedic rituals we find some references to *prāyaścittas* in the *Samhitā* and the *Brāhmaṇa* texts. Various *Śrautasūtras* identify different kinds of lapses and describe expiatory rites in detail, sometimes in separate sections for rectification. The *Baudhāyana Śrautasūtra* ( ed. W. Caland, Vol. 3, The Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1913, and C. G. Kashikar, ed.& trans. Eng., Vol. 4, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi and Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd., Delhi, 2003) belonging to the *Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda* deals with *prāyaścittas* in the three *Praśnas*, 27-29. Gopāla has written a commentary entitled '*Yajñaprāścittavivaraṇa*' on the said *Praśnas*. This unpublished commentary is being edited by the author of this paper and will throw much light on the treatment of *prāyaścittas* according to Baudhāyana School. In the meantime *Vādhūlayajñaprāyaścitta* has been published (ed. Braj Bihari Chaubey, Katyayan Vaidik Sahitya Prakashan, Hoshiarpur, 2001). This *Śrauta* text gives us a good idea about performance of expiatory rites according to Vādhūla School. It is generally known that the *Śrauta* tradition of Baudhāyana and Vādhūla School is very old in comparison with that of other Vedic Schools. Similarities are found in abundance in both the texts. Even many a passage of the two texts has found place in verbatim. To have a clear idea about the tradition of expiatory rites of both the Schools a close study of them is a desideratum. This short study in the present paper will enlighten the interested persons about the types of lapses, mistakes, violations, etc occurred in ancient Indian society including the then intellectual faculty of finding out ways of rectification of mistakes and relieving persons from sin. There will be an attempt also to remove the following confusion to some extent raised by B.B. Chaubey with reference to *Baudhāyana Śrauta Sūtra* ( 27-29) and *Vādhūlayajñaprāyaścitta* : 'whether these two are the two MSS of the same text, or one text has been copied from the other with some omission, commission or variation.' (Introduction, *Vādhūlayajñaprāyaścitta*, p. xxii)