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FOURTH SKANDHA

CHAPTER ONE

(The Progeny of Svāyambhuva Manu's Daughters)

Maitreya said:

1. Besides (his two sons Priyavrata and Uttānapāda) Manu had three daughters from Śatarūpā. They became well known as Ākūti, Devahūti and Prasūti.

2. The king, with the consent of Śatarūpā, gave Ākūti to (the progenitor) Ruci in marriage, on condition of *Putrikā dharma*[1] (even though) Ākūti had brothers.

3. The venerable progenitor Ruci, full of the spiritual glory of Brahman, begot through her a twin—a son and a daughter, by virtue of his supreme concentration (of mind on the Lord).

4. Of the two, the male child was Viṣṇu himself who had assumed the form of Yajña). And the female child was called Dakṣiṇā ('sacrificial fee') who was a part of Lakṣmī (the goddess of fortune) inseparable (from Viṣṇu)[2].

5. (As per stipulation in the marriage) Svāyambhuva Manu brought to his house his daughter's son of pervasive glory. With great delight, Ruci (also) joyfully accepted Dakṣiṇā (as his child).

6. Lord Yajña, the Lord of all Sacrifices (or *mantras*) married her (Dakṣiṇā) who was in love with him. He felt

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1. *Putrikā-dharma* : When a daughter is given in marriage on the explicit condition that the first male child of the daughter shall be the (adopted) son of the giver, it is called *Putrikā dharma*. This was done by one who had only daughters and no son. The obvious object was securing the continuity of one's race. VJ. explains that although Manu had sons, he laid down this condition as he knew that Lord Viṣṇu would be born to Ākūti. He wished to secure Viṣṇu's higher grace by becoming his adopted father.

2. *anapāyinī* : ŚR., VR. VC. point out that Dakṣiṇā was an *aṁśa* (part) of Lakṣmī. Hence the marriage of *Yajña* and *Dakṣiṇā*, though born as brother and sister, is not objectionable. VJ. takes the word to mean 'One who has neither birth nor death'. Like Nārāyaṇa, Lakṣmī manifested herself to others as an *āvirbhāva*.

delighted and had twelve sons by her, who too was highly pleased.

7. These twelve sons were : Toṣa, Pratoṣa, Santoṣa, Bhadra, Śānti, Iḍaspati, Idhma, Kavi, Vibhu, Svahna, Sudeva, Rocana.

8. In the epoch (*Manvantara*) called Svāyambhuva, they (these sons of Yajña and Dakṣiṇā) officiated as gods, and were (collectively) called *Tuṣitas*; Marīci and others were the seven sages (*Saptarṣis* of that era) while Yajña, the incarnation of Hari, occupied the post of Indra (the rulership of gods).

9. Priyavrata and Uttānapāda, the sons of Manu, were endowed with great power and splendour. They, their sons, grandsons (both from sons and daughters) and their descendants ruled throughout the period (of this *Manvantara*)*.

10. Oh Vidura, Manu gave his (second) daughter Devahūti to Kardama (a Lord of created beings). (History) relating to them has been already heard by you as narrated by me.

11. Venerable Manu gave (his third daughter) Prasūti (in marriage) to Dakṣa (another Lord of creation), a mind-born son of Brahmā. Their progeny has very widely spread all over the three worlds.

12. Now, hear as I tell you about the sons and grandsons of the nine daughters of Kardama who became the wives of the Brāhmaṇa Sages (born of Brahmā) and about whom I have spoken to you.

13. Kalā, the daughter of Kardama and the wife of the sage Marīci, gave birth to two sons—Kaśyapa and Pūrṇiman whose descendants have fully populated (filled) the world.

14. Oh conquorer of enemies (Vidura), Pūrṇiman was the father of (sons) Viraja and Viśvaga and (a daughter called) Devakulyā who washing the feet of Hari became the heavenly river Gaṅgā (in her next birth).

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*According to VP. 3.2.48 every Manvantara (epoch of a manu) has the following batch of office bearers: (1) Manu, (2) seven sages—Saptarṣis, (3) gods, (4) The ruler of gods—Indra, (5) Ruling progeny of Manu. To these Bh.P. 12,7.15 adds : (6) Incarnations of Hari. The dignitaries of these posts in the Svāyambhuva Manvantara are mentioned in the above verses.

15. Anasūyā, the wife of Atri, gave birth to three illustrious sons, viz. Datta (god Dattātreya, the sage), Durvāsas and the Moon-god, each of whom was separately born (as a manifestation of the portion) of Viṣṇu, Rudra and Brahmā (respectively).

Vidura said :

16. Oh Preceptor, please narrate to me for what purpose these (three) most eminent gods who are severally the cause of the creation, preservation and destruction (of the world), were born in the house of (the sage) Atri.

Maitreya said :

17. When the sage Atri, the foremost of the knowers of Brahman, was urged by god Brahmā (to undertake the work of) creation, he along with his wife went to one of the principal mountain ranges, Ṛkṣa[3] and was engaged in the performance of austere penance.

18-19. The mountain was covered with the forest of *Palāśa* and *Aśoka* trees which were beautified with clusters of flowers. All around, it was resounded with the echoes of the waterfalls of the river Nirvindhyā. On that mountain, the sage controlled his mind by means of Prāṇāyāma (breath-control) and stood for one hundred years on one leg, defying heat and cold (and such other pairs of opposites), and subsisted on air.

20. He contemplated (and prayed in his mind): 'I take shelter under him who alone is the Lord of the World. May he bless me with progeny just like himself.'

21-22. Seeing that the three worlds were being distressed by the fire produced by the fuel of (the sage's) breath-control (Prāṇāyāma) and issuing from the head of the sage, the three Lords (of the world, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva) went to the hermitage of the sage—the three Gods whose glories were extensively eulogised by celestial damsels, sages, Gandharvas

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3. *Ṛkṣa*—The eastern part of the Vindhya range extending from the Bay of Bengal to the sources of the Narmadā and the Śoṇa—including the mountains of Chhota Nagpur and Gondwana in which the Mahānadī rises—GDAMI 168-69.

(celestial musicians), and (demigods like) Siddhas, Vidyādharas and Nāgas.

23. The sage got his mind illuminated by the simultaneous manifestation of the three gods. (To show them respect) he stretched up his body (while standing on the leg), and saw those prominent gods.

24. (He paid them homage) by prostrating himself fully (before them) on the ground, like a stick. With articles of worship in the hollow of his palms, he respectfully received the gods who were severally riding a swan, Garuḍa and a bull and were characterised by their speciality (viz. possession of a Kamaṇḍalu, Sudarśana discus and a trident).

25. They directly expressed their pleasure by their gracious looks and smiling faces. The sage closed his eyes as they were dazzled by their (gods') brilliance.

26. With his mind concentrated on them and with folded palms he praised, in sweet words of deep significance, the three gods who are the supreme-most in all the worlds.

Atri said :

27. You are (obviously the celebrated gods) Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva who in every Yuga (kalpa), assume forms with the help of the *guṇas* (attributes) of Māyā, trifurcated for bringing about the creation, maintenance and dissolution of the universe. I bow to you all. (Kindly tell me) which of you has been invocated by me here.

28. In this hermitage, I have concentrated (contemplated) only on one glorious Lord by various means, with a desire to get a child. It is a great surprise to me how (all of) you who are beyond the range of the mind of bodied beings, have come here. Be pleased to tell me the mystery.

Maitreya said :

29. Oh Lord (Vidura), hearing this speech of the sage (Atri), the three prominent gods laughed. They replied to the sage in soft gentle words (as follows) :

The gods said :

30. "Oh Brahman ! As you have willed it, so shall it exactly happen and not otherwise. You are of true resolve. We

three form that Principle (called the Lord of the world) which you are contemplating.

31. Oh sage! May you be blessed! from our aṁśa (parts) now you will beget sons who (themselves) will be celebrated in the world and spread your reputation as well."

32. Having granted their desired boon, the Lords of gods who were properly worshipped by the couple, returned from that hermitage while they (Atri and Anasūyā) stood looking on (agape).

33. Thus Soma was born with a portion of Brahmā, Datta, the master of Yoga, with that of Viṣṇu, while Durvāsas with the portion of Śaṅkara. Now listen (to me), about the progeny of Aṅgiras (another mind-born son of Brahmā).

34. Śraddhā, the wife of Aṅgiras gave birth to four daughters viz. Sinīvālī, Kuhū, Rākā and the fourth Anumati.[4]

35. Besides these he (Aṅgiras) had two sons—Utathya who was the venerable Lord himself and Bṛhaspati (the preceptor of gods) the eminent knower of Brahman. They became celebrities in the Svārociṣa Manvantara.

36. By his wife Havirbhū, Pulastya (another mind-born son of Brahmā) had a son called Agastya who was abdominal fire in another birth and also (another son) Viśravas, the great ascetic.

37. Of Viśravas and his wife Iḍaviḍā was born god Kubera (the god of Wealth), the king of Yakṣas. Rāvaṇa, Kumbhakarṇa and Vibhīṣaṇa were born (to him) by another wife (Keśini).

38. Oh talented Vidura, Gati, the pious wife of Pulaha, gave birth to three sons, viz. Karmaśreṣṭha, Varīyān and Sahiṣṇu.

39. Even Kratu's wife, Kriyā, bore sixty-thousand (thumb-sized) sons known as Vālakhilyas—all brilliant with the splendour of Brahman.

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4. These are the deities presiding over the 14th and 15th day of the bright and dark fortnights who came to designate those days. Thus Sinivālī is the day preceding the new moon day. On this day the moon rises with a scarcely visible crescent, while Kuhū is the 15th day or the last day of the lunar month when the moon is invisible. Rākā presides over the full moon (15th) day, while Anumati is the 14th day in the bright half—Vide ASD under these heads.

40. Oh tormentor of enemies (Vidura), by his wife Ūrjā (Arundhatī) Vasiṣṭha had seven sons of whom Citraketu was prominent. They all were pure-hearted Brāhmaṇa-sages.

41. They were Citraketu, Surociṣ, Virajas, Mitra, Ulbaṇa, Vasubhṛd yāna and Dyumat. He had other sons such as Śakti and others (by another wife).

42. Citti (or Śānti), the wife of Atharvan, got a son, Dadhici alias Aśvaśiras who took the vow (of austere penance). (Henceforth) hear from me the race of Bhṛgus.

43. The distinguished sage Bhṛgu begot by his wife, Khyāti, (two) sons—Dhātṛ and Vidhātṛ, and a daughter, Śrī, who was devoted to the glorious Lord (Viṣṇu).

44. (The sage) Meru gave his daughters Āyati and Niyati (in marriage) to these (sons of Bhṛgu) severally. Of them (Āyati and Niyati) were born Mṛkaṇḍa and Prāṇa (respectively).

45. Of Mṛkaṇḍa was born Mārkaṇḍeya, and of Prāṇa, the sage Vedaśiras. Kavi, (another) son of Bhṛgu, had the venerable Uśanas (Śukrācārya, the preceptor of Daityas) as his son.

46. All these sages peopled the worlds by their descendants. I have narrated to you, Oh Vidura, the account of the progeny of Kardama's grandsons (from daughters' side)—an account which immediately removes the sins of the faithful and reverential listener.

47. Dakṣa, another (mind-born) son of god Brahmā, married Prasūti, the daughter of (Svāyambhuva) Manu[5]. He begot, by her, sixteen fair-eyed daughters.

48. The Lord (Prajāpati Dakṣa) gave thirteen of his daughters to Dharma, one to Agni, one to all Pitṛs combined, and one to god Śiva, who cuts the bonds of Saṁsāra.

49*. Śraddhā, Maitrī, Dayā, Śānti, Tuṣṭi, Puṣṭi, Kriyā, Unnati, Buddhi, Medhā, Titikṣā, Hrī and Mūrti—these (thirteen) are the wives of Dharma.

50*. Śraddhā gave birth to Śubha (auspiciousness), Maitrī to Prasāda, Dayā to Abhaya, Śanti to Sukha, Tuṣṭi to Mud (a daughter) Puṣṭi to Smaya.

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5. Vide supra 4.1.11 above.
Vide infra p. 427, note

51-52*. Kriyā bore Yoga, Unnati, Darpa; Buddhi, Artha; Medhā, Smṛti (a daughter); Titikṣā, Kṣema and Hrī, a son called Praśraya. Mūrti who was the fountain-head of all excellent qualities, gave birth to sages Nara and Nārāyaṇa.

53. When these two (sages) were born, the universe rejoiced with great pleasure. The minds (of men), the quarters, winds, rivers and mountains—all became calm and serene.

54. Trumpets were blown in the heavens; showers of flowers rained; sages offered their prayers. Gandharvas and Kinnaras sang joyfully.

55. The celestial nymphs and goddesses danced; highest bliss reigned everywhere. (There was auspiciousness everywhere). All divinities like Brahmā (and others) attended upon (Nara and Nārāyaṇa) with eulogistic prayers.

Gods said :

56**. Salutations to the Supreme Man who, manifested in himself this universe created by his own Māyā power, just like the phenomenal appearance (e.g. a city of Gandharvas) in the (cloudy) sky, and who appeared today, in the house of

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*Dharma (Religion or Piety) is always associated with virtues or certain pious mental states. These are described as the wives of Dharma and his progeny from them.

**(i) By his Will or Māyā power, this created universe is supported on Brahman, but it does not affect the Brahman, just as colours blue, white etc. of the clouds, do not stick to the sky. Or the changes of form, such as that of a god or a subhuman being with which *jīva* is associated (when it is born in that particular *yoni*), do not affect the real nature of Ātman. The Lord has manifested himself as sages under the roof of Dharma in order to instruct the distinctness of Ātman, Brahman, from the form of god, man etc., and to lead to liberation by this knowledge. We bow to that Supreme Person.—VR.

(ii) His own Māyā has arranged (created) this universe on the support of Ātman like the cluster of clouds in the sky. For shedding light (explaining the nature) of the Ātman, he has manifested himself.—VC.

(iii) Just as different kinds of cavities, (*ghaṭākāśa*, *maṭhākāśa*) are in the sky, similarly the universe is arranged (created) in Yourself. Just as the sky is neither different from, nor circumscribed by, these cavities or vacuums, so also the Lord is neither affected nor delimited by the universe. The illustration of the sky is taken to emphasize the unattachedness and not unreality.—GD.

VB. has not written his commentary on this skandha.

Dharma, in the form of sages (Nara and Nārāyaṇa), for revealing the true nature of the Self.

57. May the Lord, whose real nature is to be inferred by the Śāstras, condescend to look on us, the gods, who have been created by him, by means of Sattva, for the protection of the world from the disturbances in the orderly existence of the world—his eyes which are overflowing with mercy and which surpass the beautiful lotus, receptacle of Śrī (or the home of Lakṣmī).

58. Oh child (Vidura), the two divine sages who were thus extolled and worshipped by the (multitude of) gods, blessed them by their look, and left for mount Gandhamādana.

59. Verily, those two part (-manifestations) of Lord Hari, have incarnated in this world as Kṛṣṇa, the descendant of Yadu, and the dark-complexioned Arjuna of the Kuru race, for relieving the burden of the earth.

60. And Svāhā, the wife of Agni, gave birth to three sons—Pāvaka, Pavamāna and Śuci—all of whom are the deities presiding over Agni, and who subsist on sacrificial offerings.

61. They gave birth to fortyfive fires. These fortyfive fires, their three fathers (Pāvaka, Pavamāna and Śuci) and one grandfather (god Agni) make fortynine fire-gods.

62. These are the fire-gods in whose name *iṣṭis* (small sacrifices) called Āgneya (pertaining to Agni) are performed during Vedic sacrificial sessions, by persons, well-versed in the Vedas.

63. The manes (Pitṛs) are* (1) Agniṣvātta, (2) Barhiṣad, (3) Saumya and (4) Ājyapa. They are either Sāgnaya (receiving libations of water through the sacred fire) or Anagnaya (receiving libations directly without *agnaukaraṇa*). Svadhā, the daughter of Dakṣa was their wife.

64. Svadhā bore to them two daughters—Vayunā and Dhāriṇī. Both of them were well-versed in scriptural knowledge and spiritual knowledge, and they expounded the same.

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*These are main divisions of the Pitṛs : (1) Those who joined the manes by following only *Smārta karmas* are *Agniṣvātta*; (2) Those who joined forefathers after performing *Agnihotra* and Vedic sacrifices are *Barhiṣadas*; (3) Those who drink Soma in sacrifices and become Pitṛs are *Somapas* or Saumyas; and (4) Those who partake of ghee in sacrifices are *ājyapa*.

65. Though Satī, the wife of Śiva who was like him in qualities and character served him, she had no son.

66. (For) when she was quite young, she cast off her body of her own accord by Yogic process, as she was angry with her father who was antagonistic to her innocent husband, Śiva.

CHAPTER TWO

(The Rift between the God Śiva and Dakṣa)*

Vidura said :

1. Dakṣa was affectionate to his daughter. Why did he disregard his own daughter Satī and cherish hatred towards Śiva who was the foremost among the virtuous ?

**Introductory* : Chapters 2 to 7 (both inclusive) treat of the legend of Dakṣa's sacrifice. It is a very popular legend and is found in MBH. Shānti. 284 (283 is a different episode), the Va. P. Ch. 30 (which repeats verbatim the MBH. text), to mention a few pre-Bhāgavata texts.

The development of the conception of Dakṣa in the Vedic period is traced in PCK 407 and *MP-a Study* 54-8. This solar deity of the Vedic age seems to have developed into two Dakṣas in the Purāṇic period : (1) Dakṣa Prajāpati of the Svāyambhuva Era (*Manvantara*) and (2) Dakṣa Prācetasa of the Sāvarṇi Era. The MBH and subsequently Va.P. mix up these two Dakṣas and the story of the destruction of the sacrifice of the first Dakṣa is described to have happened in the case of the second (Prācetasa) Dakṣa.

According to the BH.P. the cause of rift between Dakṣa and Śiva is due to Dakṣa's insult by Śiva (Bh. P. IV. 2, Br. P. I.1.64). But in MBH. and Va.P. it is the argument between Dakṣa and Dadhīci as to the relative superiority of Śiva and Viṣṇu which led Dakṣa to ignore Śiva during the sacrifice.

It is possible that this legend represents the conflict between the *pravṛtti dharma* characterised by the orthodox sacrificial culture and the *nivṛtti dharma* emphasizing renunciation and Yoga. The latter may be pre-Aryan as the relics of Yogins and Śiva worship are found in the Indus valley. But it is an overstatement to say that this legend is a symbol of the struggle between monarchy and republics as stated by Dr. T.S. Rukmani (*A Critical Study of the Bh.P.* 100-2).

2. Who would and how could one hate the god Śiva who is a great divinity to the world of the movables and immovables; who bears enmity towards none, and who is tranquillity incarnate; and who is delighted in his own blissful self ?

3. Oh Brahman ! Narrate to me what led to the enmity between the son-in-law (Śiva) and the father-in-law (Dakṣa) which made Satī give up her life with which it is difficult to part.

Maitreya said :

4. Formerly during the sacrificial session of the Prajāpatis (progenitors of the world) were assembled great seers and sages, all classes of gods including divinities presiding over the sacred fires, along with their attendants.

5-6. When Dakṣa who was brilliant like the Sun entered, he dispelled the darkness of the great assembly-hall by his splendour. Seeing him, all the members of the assembly, including the presiding deities of fire, were overwhelmed with his brilliance, and stood up from their seats. Only Brahmā and god Śiva did not stand up.

7. The leaders of the assembly reverentially received Lord Dakṣa. He bowed down to god Brahmā, the creator of the universe and with Brahmā's permission, he took his seat.

8. Finding that Śiva (the Delighter of the world) was already seated and had ignored him, Dakṣa did not tolerate this. Looking askance at him, as if to consume him with the fire (of his wrath), he burst forth :

9. "Listen to me, Oh Brāhmaṇa Sages, along with gods and divinities of fire, I explain to you the mode of behaviour of good people. This is not out of jealousy or ignorance (that I speak).

10. This (god Śiva) is shameless, and has detracted the glory of the protectors of the world. This haughty fellow who does not know what should appropriately be done, has polluted the path followed by the good.

11.* He has been like a disciple unto me, as he, like a virtuous person, took the hand of my daughter who is like Sāvitrī, in the presence of Brāhmaṇas and sacrificial fire.

*Some annotators interpret this as the praise of Śiva.

12.* Having married (lit. taken the hand of) my daughter, this monkey-eyed fellow did not show due courtesy, even by words, to me whom he should have respected by standing and by bowing.

13.** To this proud, impious fellow who has given up performance of religious acts, and has violated all the bounds (of religious propriety), I gave my young daughter though reluctant to do so, as one would be to impart the sacred beautiful word (Vedas) to a Śūdra (who is not eligible to receive Vedic lore).

(i) Conforming to the traditional religious practice (at the time of his marriage), he took the hand of my daughter who is pure like Sāvitrī, in the presence of Brāhmaṇas and the sacred fire. He is, however, of the status of non-disciple i.e. worth bowing. He is a *jīvan-mukta*, and is, therefore, above formalities—GD.

(ii) Being omniscient, Śiva knew from the beginning my unworthiness which remained undisclosed till today. Hence he did not pay respect to me who am like (but not really) a good person. It is due to the virtuousness of my daughter like Sāvitrī that he married her, in the presence of Brāhmaṇas and the sacred fire—VC. & VD.

*Out of his grace, he (Śiva) satisfies the desires of persons who are passionate etc., like monkeys. He deserves to be respected by us, by standing and paying obeisance. But fie upon me ! I did not show even verbal courtesy to him—VC. & VD.

(ii) He is anxious about the redemption of people who, like a monkey, take interest in sensual pleasures. To remove the pride of the egotist Dakṣa, he established relationship with him by marrying his daughter. To eliminate his ego, Śiva incited him by not paying even verbal respect to him, though Dakṣa, as a father-in-law, should have been shown due courtesy—GD.

**(i) All religious activities are lost in Śiva as he is the Brahman. Nothing is more pure than he. He is not proud nor has he crossed any bound of propriety—VC.

VC. presumes an *avagraha* before *mānine* and *bhinna-setave*.

(ii) He is so great that even the desire to give my daughter in marriage to him did not occur to me, as comparatively my daughter was not worthy of him. It was due to the advice of Brahmā that I overcame that shyness. Śiva accepted her out of respect to Brahmā's word. Śiva is *Śūdra* i.e. one who removes grief by his favour and advice (*śucaṁ śokaṁ kṛpayā jñāna-bhaktyādyupadeśena drāvayatīti śūdraḥ* / As this belongs to 'Pṛṣodarādi' group 'c' in 'śuc' is lost and -u- is lengthened as -ū-. As to violation of etiquettes, Śiva being the Brahman, all *kriyās* (religious and other actions) are lost in him. He is absolutely pure and worthy of the highest respect. He is beyond the limits of ordinary *jīvas*. Hence the duties prescribed by the Vedas, do not apply to him.

14.* Surrounded by spirits and hosts of goblins, and with his hair scattered, he wanders in nudity, laughing and crying like a madman, in the terrible abodes of ghosts (crematories).

15.** He is bathed in the ashes of funeral pyres, and is adorned with the garlands on corpses and with human bones. He is Śiva (auspicious) in name only, but is (actually) inauspicious. He is (always) intoxicated and loved by drunken people. He is surely the Lord of devilish spirits (*pramathas*), and ghosts which are the personification of *tamo-guṇa*.

16.*** Alas! It was at the instance of god Brahmā, that I gave my virtuous daughter to such a fellow who is destitute of purity (and cleanliness), and of wicked heart, the lord of goblins (called *unmāda*).

Maitreya said :

17. Having thus reproached Śiva who sat all the while quiet (without retaliation), the enraged Dakṣa touched water (sipped it in *ācamana*) and proceeded to curse him.

18. "When sacrifices are offered to gods, this Śiva, accursed of the gods, shall not (henceforth) get his share (in

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*VC. states that Śiva's behaviour like a mad person is his *līlā* (sports) out of godly ecstasy.

(ii) GD. : The bounds of Vedic injunctions are not applicable to a votary who has realized the Brahman. The show of madness is for the purpose of teaching the world, to renounce worldly bonds of wife, sons, property etc. Rudra performs penance, while he externally behaves like a mad person.

Cf. Supra III. 14.26.

**ŚR. explains the eulogistic aspect thus :

He, being the Brahman, no *kriyās* are possible in him. There is nobody more pure than he. I was diffident about offering my daughter (a human being) to this great god, but did so to establish relationship. There is none more auspicious than he. That he is the Lord of goblins, evil spirits etc. shows how kind he is to his devotees. He removes their *tāmasic* nature and protects. He is compassionate to the wicked in his heart. Hence he is *dur-hṛd*. I am glad (*bata*) that as per advice of Brahmā, I overcame shyness, fear etc., and gave my daughter to him.

***VR. rightly criticises the absurdity of giving double, i.e. contrary interpretations, one a praise, the other a censure of Śiva. Pertinently he asks the propriety of uttering a curse on Śiva if Dakṣa praised him so highly.

the sacrificial offerings) along with Indra, Upendra (Viṣṇu) and other gods".

19. Oh Vidura, though Dakṣa was prohibited (from uttering the curse) by prominent members of the assembly, he pronounced it, on Śiva (the Lord of the mountains). In great rage, he left the place and retired to his abode.

20. Having come to know about the curse, Nandiśvara, the leader of Śiva's followers, with his eyes reddened with anger, uttered a terrible curse upon Dakṣa and the Brāhmaṇas who approvingly listened to Śiva's denunciation.

21. "He who, being ignorant, highly thinks of this mortal frame, and hates the Lord (Śiva) who does not bear enmity against anybody, cherishes the notion of difference, and has his face turned away from the Truth.

22. With the desire of gratifying low sensual pleasure, he (Dakṣa) is attached to householder's life which is full of deceptive psuedo-religious practices. His intellect is confused by *arthavāda* in the Vedas, and he is engrossed in kārmic ritual (pertaining to sacrifices and other such acts).

23. With his intellect wrongly concentrated on the body as the Soul, and having forgotten the real nature of the Soul, Dakṣa is as good as a beast. He will be intensely addicted to women, and will soon have the head (face) of a goat.

24. This dullard (Dakṣa), who regards the *avidyā* (ignorance) consisting of performing of sacrifices and other religious acts, as the real knowledge, and those who followed him (approved of him) in his censure of Śiva, shall continue in the *saṁsāra* (the cycle of births and deaths).

25. The enemies of Hara (Śiva) shall be infatuated with (and attached to) *karmas*, as their minds will be agitated by the churning (rod) of rich promises (viz. happy life in heaven) alluring like the smell of wine given in the flowery language of the Vedas.

26. Brāhmaṇas will eat anything and everything (without considering whether it is permitted by *Śāstras*). They will be devoted to learning, *tapas* (penance) and *vratas* (vows) for the sake of their own livelihood. They shall wander a-begging in this world, taking delight in property, (pleasure of) the body and sense organs."

27. Hearing him pronounce this curse upon the Brāhmaṇa community (as a whole), Bhṛgu uttered a counter-curse which is an irrevocable punishment inflicted by Brahmanical power.

28. "Those who observe the vows to propitiate god Śiva, and those that follow them, shall be the heretics and the opponents of true Śāstras.

29. They shall lose their (sense of) purity, shall be dull-witted. They shall wear matted locks of hair and bones, and smear themselves with ashes. They shall enter the cult of Śiva worship where wine shall be the divinity.

30. As you denounce the Vedas and Brāhmaṇas who, like protective dams, lay down fixed laws restricting men (for preservation of the society), you have embraced hereticism.

31. This is the only auspicious, ancient path for the people (viz. the path laid down by the Vedas). The ancients (our forefathers) have followed it, and Janārdana is its standard authority.

32. It (Veda) is the Supreme Brahman, absolutely pure. It is the eternal path of the good. Condemning this, you shall embrace hereticism wherein the Lord of goblins is the divinity".

Maitreya said :

33. While Bhṛgu was uttering the curse, Lord Śiva, being slightly disconsolate at heart (for what had happened), left (the assembly hall), along with his followers.

34. The progenitors of the world also completed the sacrificial session of one thousand years-sacrifice in which Lord Hari was the deity to be propitiated.

35. At the conclusion of the session, they took their concluding bath (*avabhṛtha*) in the confluence of the Gaṅgā and the Yamunā. Purifying themselves thus, they returned to their respective homes.

CHAPTER THREE

(Śiva dissuades Satī from attendance at Dakṣa-Yajña)

Maitreya said :

1. A long time elapsed while the son-in-law (Śiva) and the father-in-law (Dakṣa), continued their lasting enmity to each other.

2. When Dakṣa was installed as the chief of all Lords of creation by Brahmā, the highest of gods, he felt puffed up with pride (An additional factor to exclude Rudra from sacrifice).

3. Having performed the Vājapeya sacrifice, and disregarded Īśvara and others who were thoroughly proficient in Brahma-Vidyā, he (Dakṣa) began the best of sacrifices, called Bṛhaspatisava (as the Śruti enjoins this sacrifice, after the performance of the Vājapeya).

4. In that sacrifice, all Brāhmaṇa sages, heavenly sages, Pitṛs (and other) divinities were welcomed with auspicious formalities. Their wives, along with their husbands, were given auspicious reception (Those divinities, whose wives attended, were thus worshipped again).

5. Goddess Satī, the daughter of Dakṣa, came to know about the grand festival of her father's sacrifice, from the talks of the heavenly beings, while they were passing through the sky.

6-7. She saw that beautiful women of demi-god tribes (e.g. Gandharvas, Yakṣas) of rolling eyes, clad in rich garments, and wearing *padakas* (a gold ornament) round their necks, and burnished ear-rings, going with their husbands, in heavenly cars, from all directions. Seeing them flying past her own mansion, she in her eagerness, spoke to her consort, god Bhūtapati (the protector of all beings).

Satī said :

8. "It is reported that the great sacrificial festival of your father-in-law, Prajāpati Dakṣa, has now commenced. Oh beautiful Lord, let us go there, if you so desire, as these gods are also going thither.

9. My sisters, desirous of seeing their kith and kin, will certainly go there with their husbands. I wish to receive along with you, the presents which will be offered by my parents.

10. Oh Śiva, really I am eagerly longing to see there, my sisters worthy of their husbands, my aunts and my mother whose heart is full of (lit. wet with) affection, and the greatest of the sacrifices being conducted by leading sages (or the flag or sacrificial post of the sacrifice raised by great sages).

11. Oh unborn Lord ! This wonderful universe consisting of three *guṇas* (*sattva, rajas, tamas*), appears created in you by your own Māyā.[6] (Hence you have no curiosity to go). I am, however, a poor woman who do not know your real nature. I, therefore, strongly desire to see my native place.

12. Oh birthless Lord, look at those other women (in no way related to Dakṣa), richly adorned, going with their husbands in crowds. Oh Śitikaṇṭha the sky looks beautiful by the movements of their aerial cars white like sweet warbling swans (Kala-haṁsas).

13. Oh great God, how can the body (including mind) of a daughter remain unmoved, after hearing about a festival in the father's house ? Even though uninvited, people go to the houses of their friends, their husbands (masters), their preceptor and parents. (The formality of invitation is superfluous in these cases).

14. Oh immortal Lord ! Be gracious unto me. You are compassionate. You should really grant me this desire. I have been located in half of your person by you who possess perfect wisdom. Do this favour as entreated by me, to you."

The Sage said :

15. Thus earnestly entreated by his beloved wife, Śiva, who was so affectionate to his friends and relatives, was (pain-

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6. Militant Vaiṣṇava commentators like VR., VJ. refuse to give the credit of creation to Śiva. Instead of taking *aja* (unborn) as a vocative addressed to Śiva, they take *ajātma-māyayā* as one compound and interpret : 'The universe that is created by the unborn Lord Viṣṇu by his Māyā'. According to them, Śiva being a great Yogin, has the direct perception of the universe and hence no curiosity to see the festival of Dakṣa's sacrifice.

fully) reminded of the shaft-like bitter words, cutting to the quick, which Dakṣa spoke to him in the presence of (other) progenitors of the universe. He, however, replied to her with a smile.

The Lord Śiva said :

16. Oh charming lady, you have put it nicely when you said that people go to their relatives, even though they are not invited. But that is only when their vision (outlook) is not prejudiced by their powerful ego about the body being the *ātman*, and by their wrath (against such a visitor).

17. Learning, penance, wealth, beautiful personality, youth and (high) pedigree are good qualities in the case of the good, but are like a curse to the most wicked. When these attributes destroy the memory and knowledge of the wicked, they increase only the arrogance, as these wicked people cannot realize the glory of the great.

18. One should never go to the house of such persons, of unsteady minds, regarding them as relatives—persons who look upon the visitors (to their house), with crooked mentality, with frowning eye-brows and angry eyes (looks).

19. A person whose body is (deeply) wounded with arrows of the enemies, does not feel the tortures to that extent, as he who is cut to the quick by the harsh words of his own relatives of crooked minds. For the former can (at least) get sleep, but the latter suffers day and night, with a tormented heart.

20. Oh beautiful lady (of charming eyebrows), I do certainly agree that you are the most beloved of all the daughters of Dakṣa (the Lord of created beings) of eminent rank. You wlll not however receive (proper) attention or respect from your father, because of your relations with me, whom he hates intensely.

21. At the sight of the prosperity (glory, possession of *siddhis*) of great persons who stand (unconcerned) like a witness to the minds of *jīva* (i.e. are devoid of *ahaṁkāra*—ego), his heart is boiling with jealousy, and his senses are over-anxious for gratification. But being incapable of attaining to their

eminent position easily, he hates them intensely as the Asuras hated Hari.

22. Oh slender-waisted lady, the mutual exchange of respects, viz. going forth to receive, expressing modesty, paying obeisance is properly done by the wise *bhāgavatas* (devotees of the Lord) only. They do it all mentally to the Supreme Person Vāsudeva, who abides in the heart of all, but not to him who regards the Soul and the body as identical (and expects the external observance of formalities directed to his body).

23. The absolutely pure *sattva* (heart or the attribute called *sattva*) is designated as Vāsudeva; for it is in the *sattva* that Supreme Man Vāsudeva is manifested (and realized) in his real (unveiled) form. It is in the *sattva* (absolutely pure mind) that I pay obeisance[7] to him who is beyond sense perception.

24. Therefore, Oh beautiful lady, you should not see Dakṣa and his followers—even though Dakṣa is your father, the protector of your body, Dakṣa is my enemy. When I went to attend the sacrifice performed by the Prajāpatis, he expressed his hatred, by using abusive language to me, even though I was innocent (not at fault at all).

25. If you go there ignoring my advice, no good will betide you thereby. When a person of well-established reputation suffers insult from his relatives, the indignity leads immediately to his death.*

CHAPTER FOUR

(*Satī's Self-immolation by Yoga*)

Maitreya said :

1. Having said this much, Saṅkara became silent, as he anticipated the destruction (death) of his wife's body, in either case (whether he permits her to go or refuses to do so).

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7. v.l. *manasā*—deeply meditate upon him in mind.—SR.

*Cf *sambhāvitasya cākīrtir maraṇādatiricyate*/ BG. 2.34

Satī who was eager to see her friends and relatives, but was afraid of Śaṅkara, became indecisive (two in mind). (Like an oscillating pendulum) she went out (to see her relatives), and returned (for fear of Śiva).

2. Satī was troubled in her mind by the thwarting of her desire to see her kith and kin. Out of affection, she burst into tears and wept in utter despondence. She trembled in rage. She looked in wrath at the peerless Śiva, as if she would burn him.

3. Then she lost her judgment, due to her womanly nature. Heaving heavy sighs, and with her heart tormented by grief and anger, she went to her parents' house, leaving him (Śiva) who is beloved of saintly persons and who, out of love, had given half of his body to her.

4. Thousands of followers of the three-eyed-god (Śiva) including personal attendants and Yakṣas like Maṇiman, Mada and others, and with Nandikeśvara at the head, hastily yet fearlessly (or with saddened heart at her disobedience to Śiva), went after Satī who set out all alone, with quick pace.

5. They made her ride the best of the bulls (Nandikeśvara). They accompanied her, taking with them Sārikās (singing birds), balls, mirrors and lotuses (for her entertainment), a white umbrella, *chowries*, and garlands (her insignia of royalty) and musical instruments like kettle-drums, conchs and flutes.

6. She entered the place of sacrifice where Vedic hymns were loudly chanted by Brāhmaṇas, keenly competing with each other in reciting Vedic *mantras*[8]; where Brāhmaṇa sages and divinities were in attendance; where on sides were (seen) vessels and utensils made of clay, wood, iron, gold, *darbha* grass and hides.

7. Being afraid of the sacrificer (Dakṣa), who treated her insultingly, nobody except her mother and sisters, dared to welcome her, on her arrival. They (her mother and sisters),

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8. *ā-brahma-vaikasam* : OR 'Where the sacrificial act of killing the animal is sanctified by the loud chanting of Vedic hymns.'—ŚR.

RR. brands this as 'coarse' (*ślīla*) and prefers the explanation given above. All commentators do the same.

however, eagerly and rapturously embraced her, with their throats choked with tears of affection.

8. Satī who was not welcomed by her father, did not accept the hospitality and the seat of honour respectfully offered to her by her mother and maternal aunts. Nor did she pay attention to her sisters' affectionate enquiries about her health etc.

9. Seeing the sacrifice being performed without offering the due share to Rudra, and the insulting treatment meted out to Lord Śiva by her father, the great goddess Satī, who herself was not given proper reception at the sacrificial assembly, became enraged, as if she would burn the worlds in anger.

10. By her divine lustre, the goddess Satī controlled the hosts of goblins (who accompanied her) who sprang to their feet (to destroy the sacrifice). But within the hearing of the whole world, she censured (Dakṣa), the enemy of Śiva who was proud of his exertions in the path of smoke (i.e. was puffed up with performance of great sacrifices), in accents faltering with anger.

11. "Who else than you would behave inimically towards the Lord, who is above enmity ? To him nobody is superior in the world. Though he is the beloved Soul of all embodied beings, nobody is dear or hateful to him. He is the cause of all.

12*. Oh Dvija ! Persons who are jealous like you, discover faults in the virtues of others (and not merits) are called mean. Those who, occupying a middle position, note merits and demerits as they are, are regarded as great. Good people note only the merits and not the weaknesses (and these are greater). The greatest ones do not see the defect at all, but they magnify even the minutest good points.

13. It is no wonder that out of jealousy, there is always the malicious condemnation of the great among unrighteous persons who look upon this inert material body as the Soul. The glory (of such slanderers) is obscured by the dust of the

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* *Literally* : Oh Dvija ! People like you detect (see) faults even in the good qualities of others; but no good person does this. Those who magnify even the trifling merits in others are the greatest of all. You have however found fault with them (great persons).

feet of those great men. Hence it befits these (slanderers to revile the good Souls)!

14. Alas ! Your honour has become inauspicious, as you hate god Śiva, whose fame is holy and commands inviolable, and whose name of two syllables (Śi-va) if incidentally uttered by the tongue even once, destroys all the sins of men (who utter it).

15. Your honour is hating (Śiva), that friend and protector of the universe. His lotuslike feet are resorted to by the bee-like minds of the great (sages like Sanaka etc.), who long to taste the winelike honey of Brahmānanda (bliss of being absorbed in Brahman)—Feet which shower blessings upon people desirous of worldly objects (irrespective of their worthiness to receive them.)

16.* You say that god Śiva is inauspicious—*a-śiva*—in his dress and behaviour. If that be so, do not gods etc. other than your honour, (such as Brahmā and others) who wear on their heads flowers etc. fallen from his feet,* know that he is auspicious (śiva) only in name but is really inauspicious—Śiva who with his dishevelled matted locks of hair, dwells in the cremation grounds in company of goblins, and. who decorates himself with the flower-garlands, ashes (of funeral pyres) and skulls lying there ?

17. When the Supreme Lord (Śiva), the protector of religion, is blasphemed by restraintless people, one should shut one's ears and leave the place if he is powerless (to kill the slanderer or die in the action). If he is powerful enough, he should, by force, cut off the vituperative tongue which utters such evil words, and lay down his own life (if necessary for that). Such is the course of righteous duty (*dharma*).

18. I, therefore, shall not retain this body which is born of you, the slanderer of Śiva. For, the wise people say that the remedy for eating of the impure food taken in through ignorance, is to vomit it out.

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*VR. is hard put to it to reconcile this verse with the injunction in the *Sāttvata-tantra* that no god other than Nārāyaṇa should be respected (*nānyaṁ devaṁ namas-kuryāt* etc.). He says that injunction is restricted to those who are trying for *mokṣa*. He concludes :

sarva-devatānām brahmātmakatvena-anusandhānaṁ tvaviruddhaṁ-eveti na virodhaḥ ।

19. The mind of the great sage who finds joy in his own Self, does not necessarily follow Vedic statements (regarding injunctions and prohibitions). Just as the movements of celestial beings and men are different (the former through the sky and the latter on the earth) a person who follows his own course of duty, should not find fault with another following a different path.

20. It is true that *karmas* of two kinds—*pravṛtta* (sacrificial acts etc.) and *nivṛtta* (self-control, renunciation etc.) are prescribed in the Vedas, severally, for two distinct types of men—one characterised by attachment to worldly objects and the other, by absence of it. Both the types of *karmas* cannot be found (practicable) simultaneously in the same agent. But no duty of doing a *karma* of any kind devolves upon the Brahman (god Śiva).

21. (You need not entertain the pride that you are affluent and Rudra is a pauper for), the mystic powers (*siddhis* like *aṇimā* etc.) possessed by us, can never be yours, oh father. They are not found (attained) in sacrificial halls (by performance of sacrifices). The cause of our (attainment of) powers is unmanifest (as they depend on our will). They are enjoyed by Avadhūtas (knowers of Brahman who have renounced everything). While your path is extolled by creatures following the path of smoke (*karma-mārga*) who are gratified with the food offered in sacrifices.

22. Now enough of this impure body born of you who have sinned against (offended) Lord Śiva. I have been ashamed of my kinship with an unworthy father. Fie upon the birth from a man who vilifies the great Souls.

23. When (out of joke) Lord Śiva (the bull-bannered god) refers to your *gotra* by addressing me as "Dākṣāyaṇī" (Dakṣa's daughter), I immediately lose all joyfulness and smiles, and become extremely pained at heart. Therefore, I shall give up this body (corpse) begotten of you."

Maitreya said :

24. Oh vanquisher of enemies ! Having thus addressed Dakṣa in the sacrificial hall, she sat silently on the ground with her face to north. She wore a yellow garment. She

touched water (i.e. sipped it as in *ācamana*), and closing her eyes, she entered the *yogic* path (for casting off her material body).

25. Steady in her *yogic* posture, she controlled *prāṇa* and *apāna* equally at the navel. Forcing up the vital air called *udāna* from the mystic plexus at the navel (*maṇipūra cakra*), she gradually brought it up and steadied it along with intellect at the mystical plexus in the heart. The pure, sinless lady brought it through her throat to (*ājñā cakra*), the mystical plexus in the midregion of the eyebrows.

26. Thus, out of her anger against Dakṣa, she desired to cast off her body which was many times lovingly placed (and caressed) on his lap by god Śiva, the most exalted amongst the great. The strong-willed lady instituted the *yogic* contemplation (*dhāraṇā*) of fire and wind in her limbs (body).

27. Then meditating on the bliss of the lotus-like feet of her lord, the preceptor of the world (Lord Śiva), Satī (was so absorbed that she) perceived nothing else. She destroyed all impurities. And her body was soon ablaze with fire produced by her *samādhi* (*yogic* concentration).

28. There arose a tremendous uproar of grief ('alas ! alas !!') both in the heaven and on the earth by those who witnessed the great miracle. "Alas ! provoked by (her father) Dakṣa, Satī, the beloved spouse of Lord Śiva, had thrown away her life.

29. Oh ! Look at the enormous wickedness of the Lord of Creation (Dakṣa) from whom are born all creatures, mobile and immobile. His high-souled daughter who always deserved honour, had to give up her life, due to insults inflicted by him.

30. This Dakṣa of intolerant (jealous) heart, the hater of the Brahman, will reap great infamy in this world. This enemy of god Śiva did not prevent his own daughter, while she prepared for death, on account of the disrespectful treatment meted out to her."

31. While the people were criticising thus, at the sight of the miraculous self-immolation of Satī, her attendants rose with their weapons to kill Dakṣa.

32. Having noticed the vehemence of the on-rushing attendants of Śiva, venerable Bhṛgu offered oblations in the

sacrificial fire called *dakṣiṇāgni* reciting the *mantras* of Yajurveda efficacious to kill the destroyers of the sacrifice.

33. While the priest *adhvaryu* (viz. Bhṛgu) poured the oblation, gods called Ṛbhus who had secured share in the *soma* juice by their austere penance, rose up in thousands, (from the sacrificial pit) with great force.

34. Beaten by the gods who were armed with fire brands and who were resplendent with Brahmanic lustre, all the attendants of Śiva, *pramathas* and *guhyakas* dispersed in various directions.

CHAPTER FIVE

(*Destruction of Dakṣa's Sacrifice*)

Maitreya said :

1. Having learnt from Nārada, the report of the death of his wife (Satī) on being insulted by Prajāpati Dakṣa, and of the total rout of the army of his attendants by the Ṛbhus in that Sacrifice, Śiva's anger knew no bounds.

2. Śiva (the god with matted locks of hair) got enraged, and bit his lips. He pulled out a matted lock of hair which dazzled with terrific splendour, like the flash of lightning, and a flame of fire. He suddenly sprang to his feet, and with a loud laughter and roar, dashed it on the ground.

3. From it (was born Vīrabhadra), of colossal size, who touched the skies, by his stature. He had a thousand arms. His complexion was like a dark cloud. He had three eyes brilliant like the Sun. He had sharp fangs. His locks of hair were shining like burning flames of fire. He wore a garland of skulls and held various weapons aloft (for striking).

4. Śiva, the Supreme Lord, the master of *bhūtas*, commanded Vīrabhadra who, with folded hands, requested for an order. "Oh Rudra, as you are my part (manifestation, you need not be afraid of Brahmanic power). You be the leader of my army, oh warrior, and destroy Dakṣa along with his sacrifice".

5. Being thus commanded by wrathful Śiva, he circumambulated the all-powerful god of gods. Oh Vidura, he then regarded himself capable of withstanding the might of very powerful warriors, by his irresistible force.

6. He was followed by the attendants of Rudra who were roaring loudly. He himself thundered most terribly. Raising his trident which was capable of killing even the god of Death, he dashed forth, with his feet jingling with ornaments.

7-8. Having seen (a cloud of) dust in the northern direction, the sacrificial priest, the sacrificer (Dakṣa), members of the sacrificial assembly, Brāhmaṇas and their wives began to speculate : "What darkness is this ? From which place is the cloud of dust (coming) ? Winds are not blowing. Nor can these be robbers, as king Prācīnabarhiṣ of iron rule, is still alive. Cows are not driven home so hastily. Whence is this dust ? Is the world now due for dissolution (*pralaya*)?"

9. Ladies of whom Prasūti was prominent, commented with a troubled heart : "This is the consequence of the sin committed by Dakṣa, the Lord of Creation, who slighted his innocent daughter Satī, in the presence of his other daughters.

10. It may be due to Dakṣa's offence against Rudra who dances at the end of the universe, with his locks of matted hair scattered about, and with the elephants supporting the directions pierced on the prongs of his trident, and with his bannerlike hands holding up the missiles (for discharge), tearing down the directions, by thunderlike peals of laughter.

11. When he is full of rage, can anyone fare well, even if he be god Brahmā himself who provoked his (Rudra's) wrath —Rudra, who is of irresistible splendour, full of wrath, unbearable to look at when he knits his eyebrows in angry looks, and who has scattered the whole group of constellations with his terrible fangs."

12. While people with perturbed eyes, were speculating thus wildly, there were thousands of omens portending misfortune to Dakṣa, frequently appearing in the sky, and on the earth.

13. Oh Vidura, in the meanwhile the big sacrificial pandal was rushed at on all sides, and occupied by the followers of Rudra with their weapons held up in their hands. They

were short in stature, dark and brown (in complexion) and their faces and stomachs were like crocodiles.

14. Some broke the *Prāgvaṁśa* (the beam resting on the eastern and western pillars of the sacrificial hall). Others broke the apartment of the sacrificer's wife (This is to the west of the sacrificial hall). Some broke the assembly hall in front (of the sacrificial hall). Some broke the store-room of the materials for sacrificial offerings; others, the cottage of the sacrificer himself, and the kitchen.

15. Some smashed the sacrificial utensils; some put out the sacrificial fire; some urinated in the sacrificial pit, and some cut down the zonelike construction around the sacrificial platform.

16. Some struck the sages; others threatened the wives of the priests, etc.; others seized gods who were near by and trying to run away.

17. Maṇiman bound Bhṛgu; Vīrabhadra, Prajāpati Dakṣa; Caṇḍīśa, god Pūṣan; Nandīśvara caught hold of Bhaga.

18. All the sacrificial priests, along with the members of the assembly and gods, saw this. Being severely pelted with stones, they ran quickly, helter-skelter in all directions.

19. Glorious Vīrabhadra pulled out mustaches and the beard of Bhṛgu, while he was offering the oblations with *sruva* (a ladle) in his hand, as he had laughed derisively in the assembly showing his beard (when Dakṣa insulted Śiva).

20. Out of anger, venerated Vīrabhadra knocked down Bhaga and pulled out his eyes, as in that sacrificial session of the assembly (while Dakṣa censured Śiva), he made signs with his eyes to Dakṣa.

21. He knocked out the teeth of Pūṣan as Balarāma did to the king of Kaliṅga, as he laughed, showing his teeth, while the great god Śiva was vilified by Dakṣa.

22. The three-eyed Vīrabhadra (threw down Dakṣa and) seating himself on Dakṣa's chest, he tried to cut his head by a sharpedged weapon, but he was unable to do so.

23. Hara (Vīrabhadra) was greatly wonderstruck to find that the skin of Dakṣa was not cut by weapons charmed with Vedic *mantras* called *astras*. He (who is a form of Paśupaṭi) deeply thought what to do.

24. Observing the way in which animals are killed in the sacrifice, the Lord of Paśus (Souls) severed by that method the head of Dakṣa, the sacrificer, whom he made the animal to be sacrificed.

25. There arose a shout of applause 'well done', 'bravo' from the *Bhūtas*, *Pretas* and *Piśācas* (members of Vīrabhadra's army) who praised that act of gallantry. The reverse was the case in others (i.e. in Dakṣa's camp).

26. Full of rage, Vīrabhadra threw Dakṣa's head in the sacrificial fire called *Dakṣiṇāgni*, as an oblation. Having burnt down the sacrificial edifice, he returned to Kailāsa, the home of Guhyakas.

CHAPTER SIX

(*Appeasement of Rudra—Revival of Dakṣa*)

Maitreya said :

1-2. Thereupon all the hosts of gods who were defeated by the armies of Rudra, had got their bodies hacked and hewn with tridents, spears (*paṭṭiśa*), swords, maces, iron bars and clubs. Being overwhelmed with fear, they, along with the sacrificial priests and their associates, approached god Brahmā, bowed down to him, and narrated in details this incident.

3. (As) worshipful Brahmā and Nārāyaṇa, the Soul of the universe, had long back foreseen it, they did not go to the sacrifice of Dakṣa.

4. After giving them hearing, Brahmā said, "the desire to retaliate against a person of superior might, even though he has offended you, cannot generally lead to the welfare (of the weak retaliator).

5. Here, however, you have committed the offence against Śiva, inasmuch as you excluded him from the sacrifice, even though he had a rightful share (in the sacrificial offerings). Now, with a pure chastened heart, you resort to his lotuslike feet and obtain his grace, for he can be easily propitiated.

6. You, who wish for the revival (and completion) of the sacrifice, should immediately beg the pardon of the god, who is cut to the quick, by words of abuse (by Dakṣa), and is bereaved of his beloved wife. If he is enraged, the whole world along with its protectors, will cease to be.

7. The Lord Rudra is absolutely independent. Neither I nor Yajña (Indra of that era), nor you nor sages or any embodied being, knows his real nature and the extent of his strength and power. (This being the case) who can be certain of the means to be adopted (for his propitiation)".

8. Having advised the gods, thus, Brahmā accompanied by them (gods), Pitṛs, Prajāpatis set out from his own region (Satyaloka) to Kailāsa, the chief of the mountains, the favourite abode of god Śiva, the destroyer of the Tripuras.

9. Mount Kailāsa is inhabited by gods who have attained superhuman powers (*siddhis*) by their (superiority in) birth, or by drugs, penance, *mantra* (incantation of mystic power) or the practice of *Yoga*. It is always crowded with Kinnaras, Gandharvas (celestial musicians) and celestial damsels.

10. Its summits are made up of various kinds of gems; they are variegated with different kinds of metallic ores; they are covered with various kinds of trees, creepers and shrubs. They abound in different kinds of wild beasts.

11. With its streams of crystal clear water, and its peaks and caves, the mountain is a pleasure-haunt for *siddha* women, to sport along with their lovers.

12. It is resonant with the cries of the peacocks, melodious humming of bees intoxicated with honey, loud notes of cuckoos and warbling of birds.

13. It seems to invite birds, by the highly raised boughs of wish-yielding trees. It appears to be in motion by the wandering of elephants. It is, as if, speaking with the murmuring of flowing springs.

14-15. It is beautified with trees such as (the heavenly) Mandāra and Pārijāta; with Saralas, Tamālas, Sālas, Tālas, Kovidāras, Asanas, Arjunas, mango-trees, Kadambas, Nīpas, Nāgas, Punnāgas, Campakas, Pāṭalas, Aśokas, Bakulas, Kundas, and Kurabakas.

16-19. It is ornamented with lotus flowers of golden

hue (and hundred petals), excellent cardamom creepers, Mālatī (Jasmine), Kubjas, Mallikās, Mādhavīs; and also with (fruit) trees (such as) Panasa, Audumbara, Aśvattha, Plakṣa, Nyagrodha, Hiṅgu, Bhūrja; with herbs and plants like betel nuts, Rājapūga (a kind of arecanut palm), rose-apple trees, date-palms, Jambū, mango-trees and others, with Priyāla, Madhuka, and Iṅguda (soapnut trees). It was adorned with various kinds of bamboos called Veṇu and Kīcaka; it was beautified with swarms of birds which were sweetly singing on the banks of the lakes rich in the beds of lilies and lotuses of various kinds.

20. It was abounding in deer, monkeys, boars, lions, bears and Porcupines, Gavayas (a species of ox) Sarabhas (a mythological eight-footed animal), tigers, *ruru*-deer, buffaloes and other beasts.

21. It was infested with a number of beasts called Karṇāntra, one-footed animals, horse-faced animals, wolves, musk-deer; and it presented a charming sight with its sandy banks of lotuslakes, surrounded by gardens of plantain trees.

22. It was surrounded by the Nandā (the Ganges) whose waters have been all the more hallowed by the ablutions of Satī. At the sight of that mountain of Lord Śiva, gods were filled with wonder.

23. There (on the mountain), they beheld the famous and beautiful city of Alakā, with its garden called Saugandhika, where grew the species of lotus, bearing the same name (Saugandhika).

24. Along the outskirts of the city, flow the two rivers Nandā and Alakanandā, which are highly sanctified with the dust of the ever-hallowed feet of Viṣṇu.

25. Oh Vidura, when celestial women get tired of their amorous sports, they descend from their heavenly cars into these rivers. They then plunge and sport therein, sprinkling their mates with water.

26. (Being tempted by the fragrance of saffron), elephants, though not thirsty, drink the waters of these rivers, yellow on account of the fresh saffron washed (from the breasts of celestial women) during their baths, and make the female elephants also drink it.

27-28. Alakā, the capital of the Yakṣa king (Kubera), which was swarmed with hundreds of aerial cars made up of silver, gold and highly precious stones, and inhabited by Yakṣa women, looked like the sky, overcast with clouds and streaks of lightning. They (Brahmā and others) bypass the capital of Kubera, and the Saugandhika forest, which was beautified with wish-yielding trees with variegated flowers, fruits and leaves.

29. (Therein) the cooking and warbling of cuckoos and other birds, harmonised with the melodious humming of bees. It was full of lakes with lotus beds, which were the most favourite haunts of swans of melodious notes.

30. (In that forest) the breeze blowing over the Haricandana trees against which wild elephants have rubbed their bodies, created frequently more agitation in the wives of Yakṣas.

31. There were tanks beautified with lotuses, with steps of *vaidūrya* gems, built around them. It was enjoyed by Kiṁpuruṣas. Having seen the forest, the gods saw a banyan tree near by.

32. It was hundred *Yojanas* in height; its branches extended seventy-five *Yojanas*, on every side; it had a permanent shade on all sides; it had no nests on it, and it warded off the Sun.

33. Beneath that tree, which induced great concentration of mind (*mahā-yoga*), and which is the resort of people seeking liberation, the gods beheld Śiva, seated like the god of Death, free from anger.

34. (They saw) Śiva of a very tranquil personality. He was attended upon by great serene Yogins like Sanandana and others and also by Kubera, his friend, and the master of Guhyakas and Rākṣasas.

35. (They saw) the Supreme Lord Śiva, the friend of the universe, who is following the path of *upāsanā*, concentration and Yoga meditation[9], practising it out of affection for the welfare of the people.

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9. *Vidyā-patham*—(i) The path of *bhakti* supplemented by paths of knowledge (*jñāna*) and of *karma* (action)—VR.

(ii) One who propagated (and thus resorted to) the paths of *vidyā*, *tapas* and *yoga*—VC.

(iii) VJ. reads *dhyāyantam* for *carantam* and treats it as adj. quali-

36. His body had the golden hue of evening clouds. He wore the marks which are desirable of ascetics e.g. sacred ashes, a club, matted hair and the hide of a deer. He bore the crescent moon (on his forehead).

37. He was seated on a seat of *darbha* grass. He was expounding to Nārada the nature of the eternal Brahman, while other saints were listening.

38. He placed his left lotuslike foot on the right lap, and placed his left hand on the left knee (i.e. in the Vīrāsana posture[10]). A rosary of beads was round his right wrist, and he assumed *tarka mudrā*[11].

39. The sages, along with the protectors of the world, folded their hands and bowed to god Śiva (Lord of Mountains). Śiva who was absorbed in the meditation of being one with the blissful Brahman; who wore a *Yoga-kakṣa* (a strap to secure the position of the left knee)[12]; and who was the foremost among the contemplators.

40. Knowing that god Brahmā (Self-born god) had come, he (Śiva) whose feet had been respected by the Lord of gods and *asuras*, rose (from his seat) and bowed to him with his head, as the most adorable Viṣṇu did to Kāśyapa (in Vāmana incarnation).

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fying Śiva and takes other adjectives to qualify Viṣṇu. So according to VJ. : They saw Śiva who was contemplating on Nārāyaṇa who is the disinterested friend and well-wisher of the universe, and confers auspiciousness on the people, and who is the preceptor in and object of knowledge, penance and Yoga which he is practising.

(iv) GD. explains: Śiva practises the path of *upāsanā*, mental concentration and *Yoga*. He practises *upāsanā* out of affection for the world, to confer on it auspiciousness. He is the well-wisher of the world of which he is the creator, preserver and destroyer. Being the Lord of the world, he takes care of its welfare.

10. It is described as under :

eka-pādam athaikasmin vinyased ūru-saṁsthitam /
itarasminsathā bāhum vīrāsanam idam smṛtam //

11. *Tarka-mudrā* or *Jñāna-mudrā* : Joining the tips of the thumb and the index finger, and straightening the other fingers after joining them together. This position of the hand is *tarka mudrā*.

12. Probably it might be a wooden support called *kubḍī* in Marathi. Yogis keep it under their armpit to support the erect posture of their body during contemplation.

41. So also the hosts of other Siddhas, along with great sages, who were (sitting) around Śiva, did the same. God Brahmā who was thus bowed (to by them), spoke, as if with a smile, to Śiva (the god who wears the crescent moon on the head), who was still in a respectful pose (bowing).

Brahmā said :

42*. I know you to be the Lord of the universe. You are the same undifferentiated Brahman which is the cause of both the Śakti (*prakṛti* or the divine energy) and Śiva (the *puruṣa*) who are both the womb and the seed of the world.

43. Oh Lord, it is you who carry on your sport through Śiva and Śakti who are essentially one (*sarūpayoḥ*)[13], and create, protect and destroy the universe, as a spider does with his cobweb[14].

44**. You have created the institution of sacrifice through Dakṣa, as a string or instrument for the preservation of the

*(i) Parabrahman is the inner controller (*antar-yāmin*) of Rudra who is merely an *āveśa* type of incarnation of Parabrahman. Therefore Rudra is identified with the Parabrahman and the attributes of the latter are applied to him. Hence this is the eulogy of Parabrahman—VR. (ii) VJ. says that these verses are in praise of Narasiṁha (Viṣṇu) for the same reason as above. (iii) VC. regards that the author has followed *Śaiva-mata*, in this panegyric.

13. VR. accepts the v.l. *svāṁśayoḥ* : Śiva and Śakti are the parts or *aṁśas* of the *viśiṣṭa* mentioned as *sva*. This verse is addressed to Parabrahman who is the *antar-yāmin* of Rudra. *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa* form the body of Parabrahman. VR. expounds the stand of *viśiṣṭādvaita* with reference to god and the world etc. in this com. (ii) VC. explains this reading: Śiva is god's *aṁśa*. *Śakti* is Śiva's shadow. Hence they are equated here. VJ. accepts the v.l. *Svarūpayoḥ*. He regards this verse as addressed to Viṣṇu who is the *antar-yāmin* of both Śiva and Śakti. They are not one in essence with Viṣṇu. He uses them as instruments for the creation etc. of the universe.

14. Cf. *yathorṇa-nābhiḥ sṛjate gṛhṇate ca* /—Muṇḍaka Up. 1.1.7.

**Oh bestower of *dharma* and *artha* (religious merit and wealth)! For the attainment of *puruṣārthas*, you have created the institution of sacrifice by efficacious (*dakṣa*) *sūtra*. The bounds of *varṇa*, *āśrama* etc. are fixed by you. Brāhmaṇas adopt strict religious vows and faithfully follow these limitations or commands—VR.

(ii) VC. and SD. state that here Brahmā implies that as Śiva had destroyed the sacrifice of Dakṣa who followed Vedic injunctions laid down by Śiva, it was Śiva's responsibility to see to it that the sacrifice was completed.

three Vedas which bestow *dharma* and *artha* (religious merit and wealth)[15]. It is you who have ordained the boundaries (of the course of conduct) of the world-boundaries which Brāhmaṇas, who have adopted religious vows, follow with faith.

45. Oh auspicious Lord! You confer heaven (*svarga*) or final beatitude (*Mokṣa*) on those who perform auspicious deeds, and assign the terrible dark hell to the perpetrators of evil deeds. Why is it that the same act in the case of some persons, gives the contrary result? (Why should Dakṣa who followed the Vedic path, and accordingly tried to perform a sacrifice as per Vedic injunction, meet with that fate?)

46*. Verily anger cannot generally[16] overwhelm pious people as it would do in the case of brute (-like ignorant persons. For these (righteous people) have offered their hearts to your feet, and visualise you in all beings, and see all beings as one with (their Soul)[17]. (If your righteous devotees are above anger, how is it that you, their god, can be wrathful?).

47. A person (of exalted status) like you, ought not to kill those who perceive differentiation in their hearts; who fix their eyes on *karmas* (ritualistic acts) only; being of wicked minds, they are always jealously burning in their hearts at the prosperity of others; who being naturally disposed to hurt the

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15. *dharmārtha-dugha* : Alternatively ŚR. takes it as a Voc.—*dugha*. Oh Lord Śiva who give religious merits and wealth ! For the attainment of *dharma* and *artha* you have created etc.

(ii) VJ. takes this as instr. sing. and explains it as qualifying Dakṣa. According to VJ. : Dakṣa's sacrifice was disturbed by Hari, as Dakṣa treated Śiva disrespectfully. Śiva was superior to Dakṣa even as a devotee. Hence Hari disturbed the sacrifice, as the boundary or etiquette to be observed was crossed by Dakṣa.

*(i) It is impossible that your wrath can be the cause of such a contrary result. The righteous persons entertain no anger against good people (ŚR.) (ii) VJ. takes this verse as addressed to Viṣṇu, and explains that Brahmā does not attribute any anger to Viṣṇu. If the devotees of Viṣṇu are not overwhelmed with anger, there is no possibility of finding resentment in Viṣṇu.

16. *Prāyeṇa*—Śiva might have been angry as there are exceptions in such people, e.g. Sanaka's anger on Jaya & Vijaya —VC.

17. *apṛthag-didṛkṣatam*—Those who positively see things as they are —VJ.

feelings of others, wound them by harsh words. For such (wicked) persons are doomed by the Providence.

48*. If persons who have their minds deluded by the unfathomable Māyā of Viṣṇu, and who consider the universe as different from God, offend the righteous at any time or place, they regard it (the offence) as caused by the Providence. Out of compassion they (the righteous) definitely show mercy to them, but do not show their prowess for their destruction.

49. Oh Lord! you have your intellect uninfluenced (untouched) by the irresistible Māyā of the Supreme Man, and hence you are Omniscient. You should therefore show grace to persons whose minds are affected by the Māyā, and hence, whose minds follow (the path of) ritualistic *karmas*.

50. Oh Lord! Be pleased to revive (recommence) the sacrifice of Dakṣa, the son of Manu—the sacrifice which remained incomplete as it was wrecked by you when the petty minded priests who conducted the sacrifice did not offer you, your due share (in it).

51. May this sacrificer (Dakṣa) be alive again. May Bhaga get back his eyes as before. Let Bhṛgu grow his beard and mustaches. Let Pūṣan have his teeth as before.

52. Oh Rudra (Manyu)! By your grace may gods and sacrificial priests, the limbs of whose bodies have been wounded and broken by weapons and stones, be restored to health immediately.

53. Oh Rudra! Whatever will remain after the completion of the sacrifice shall be your share[18]. Oh destroyer of the sacrifice, let this sacrifice be consummated today, with this share assigned to you.

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*VJ. This verse is addressed to Rudra so that he should not entertain any anger against Dakṣa : 'In this world, minds of persons like Dakṣa, are overpowered by Māyā—the binding power of Viṣṇu. How is it that when the persons of incorrect perception, offend or hate the good, righteous persons like you do not feel compassion for them, and oblige them by toleration ? For the ignorant have acted so, due to their previous *karmas* and under compulsion of Lord's will.

(ii) SD. & GD. : The righteous persons take the offence done to them as due to their own *karmas*, and feel compassion for the wicked, for their future life in hell.

18. Literally : Oh Rudra ! May all that has remained of the sacrifice be your share.

CHAPTER SEVEN

(Completion of Dakṣa's Sacrifice)

Maitreya said :

1. Oh Vidura (of mighty arms) ! God. Śiva who was thus entreated by Brahmā, was highly pleased. With a loud laugh, he said, "Listen".

Śrī Mahādeva said :

2. Oh Lord of the created beings, I do not refer to (pronounce), nor do I recollect the misdemeanour of the ignorant who are overwhelmed with Lord's Māyā. I have only meted out punishment there (to the offenders).

3. The head of Prajāpati Dakṣa which has been burnt, may have the face of a he-goat. Let god Bhaga look at his own portion of offering in the sacrifice, through the eyes of Mitra god.

4. Let god Pūṣan who eats flour only eat the offering of flour with the teeth of the sacrificer. The gods, who have offered to me the remaining portion of the sacrifice, will have all their limbs restored, properly.

5. Let *Adhvaryus* and other sacrificial priests who have lost their arms use the arms of gods, Aśvins; while those who have lost their hands should work with those of god Pūṣan. Bhṛgu will have the beard and mustaches of a he-goat.

6. Oh Vidura, when all beings heard the speech of the most bountiful god Śiva, their hearts were fully satisfied, and they exclaimed 'Well done, well done'.

7. Thereupon, gods along with sages, (cordially) invited god Śiva (to help the consummation of the sacrifice), and went again to the site of the sacrifice, along with Śiva and Brahmā.

8. Having accomplished completely whatever Lord Bhava instructed them to do, they joined the head of the sacrificial animal (he-goat), to the trunk of Dakṣa.

9. While the head was being joined (to Dakṣa's body), Śiva cast a gracious look at it, (and lo!) Dakṣa got up as though from sleep, and saw Śiva in front of him.

10. Prajāpati Dakṣa whose mind had been turbid with hatred against Śiva (god with a bull on his banner), became

free from that impurity (hatred), like a pool (the waters of which become clear and translucent) in the autumn.

11. He (Dakṣa) had a mind to offer praise (to Śiva). But recollecting his daughter who was no more, his throat got choked with tears of affection and anxiety, and he could not utter a word of praise.

12. The wise Prajāpati Dakṣa who was overwhelmed with affection, controlled his mind with difficulty. He then praised Lord Śiva, with sincere devotion.

Dakṣa said :

13. "Oh venerable Lord! Even though you were disrespected by me, a great favour has been shown to me by you, in meting out a (corrective) punishment. Both you and Hari are never different to even fallen Brāhmaṇas. How can you be so to those who follow religious vows (i.e. the sacrificial duties).

14. For the preservation of the Vedas and knowledge of Ātman[19] you created out of your mouth[20] Brāhmaṇas who possessed learning and practised penance and religious vows[21] at the beginning (of the world). Oh great god, you therefore protect Brāhmaṇas in all calamities like a herdsman protects his cattle with a staff.

15. May the Lord who, though insulted in the assembly with arrowlike piercing words of abuse, by me, who was ignorant about the true knowledge (of his real nature), ignored them, and with his gracious look (at me) saved me who was falling down for having reviled the most worshipful person— May that venerable Lord be pleased with his own (merciful) act (as it is beyond my capacity to repay this obligation)."

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19. *Brahmātva-tatavmavitum*. To protect the continuity of the knowledge that everything mobile and immobile is in reality Brahman, GD.

20. *mukhataḥ*—chiefly (VC.).

21. Or : Manifesting yourself as Brahma at the beginning of the world.—ŚR. VR. : You are the four-faced Brahmā who created Brāhmaṇas for the preservation of the true knowledge about *Paramātman* and *jīva* by your own realization and instruction, at the beginning of the *kalpa*. VJ. accepts the v.l. *brahmātmatām prathayitum*. For proclaiming that you are the protector of the Vedas (Brahman). Or : You are the special abode of Brahman (Hari) perfect in all highest attributes.

Maitreya said :

16. Having thus apologised to Śiva (who showers blessings on devotees), he (Dakṣa), with the permission of god Brahmā, restored the continuity of sacrifice, with the help of preceptors and sacrificial priests and fire.

17. For the continuity of the sacrifice and for purification (from the pollution resulting) from the touch of warriors (such as, Pramathas), the best of the Brāhmaṇas offered in three plates Puroḍāśa (oblation made of ground rice) dedicated to Viṣṇu.

18. Oh King (Vidura), while, along with the sacrificial priest (*adhvaryu*) who stood holding the oblation in hand, the sacrificer (Dakṣa) meditated upon Hari with pure heart (so earnestly that) Hari manifested himself.

19. Then eclipsing their (of the members of the assembly) splendour by his lustre which illumined the ten quarters, he was brought there by Garuḍa whose two wings were the two Sāma hymns[22] (viz. *Bṛhad* and *Rathantara*).

20. He was of blue complexion and wore a zone of gold. He was adorned with a (gold) crown brilliant like the Sun. His countenance was beautified with locks of hair, dark like black-bees, and with ear-rings. With a conch, a lotus, a discus, an arrow, a bow, a mace, a sword and shield in each arm adorned with gold ornament, he looked (beautiful like a blossoming Karṇikāra tree).

21. His consort (Lakṣmī) was resting on his bosom (in the form of *Śrīvatsa*). He wore a garland of forest-flowers (*vanamālā*). He delighted the universe even with his slight winsome smile and looks. On his sides were waving fans and *chowries* (white) like royal swans. He appeared beautiful with a moonlike white umbrella over his head.

22. Seeing him arrive, all gods and others of whom Brahmā, Indra and Śaṅkara were prominent at once stood up and bowed to him.

23. Their splendour was eclipsed by his. With their tongues faltering through his awe, they folded their hands on their heads, and attended upon him (respectfully).

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22. *Stotra-Vājinā*— (i) Who was expert in singing the hymns (VR).
(ii) VJ. reads *Stotra-nirjita* : Who has secured Hari's grace by singing Sāma hymns.
(iii) Cf. *bṛhad-rathāntare pakṣau*—Kauṣītaki Up. 1.5.

24. Even though his glory was beyond the reach of their capacities (as they are his partial manifestations), Brahmā and others began, to the best of their knowledge, to sing the glory of him (Viṣṇu) who manifested that form to confer his blessings.

25. Dakṣa himself took with him the articles of worship in an excellent receptacle[23]. Joyfully singing his praise with his hands folded, devoutly he sought the protection of the Lord of Sacrifices, who is the Supreme preceptor of the Prajāpatis and who was surrounded by attendants like Nanda and Sunanda.

*Dakṣa said** :

26. In your own essence (essential form)[24], you are pure, untouched by states of mind (e.g. wakefulness etc.). You are absolutely one (without a second), and (hence) above fear and of the nature of pure consciousness. You have negated Māyā[25] and are completely self-dependent. But when you take incarnations (as Rāma or Kṛṣṇa) by the same Māyā, you appear to abide in Māyā tainted with impure matter.

The officiating sacrificial priests said :

27**. Oh Lord, untainted by merits or demerits (or by

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23. *gṛhīta-uttamam* : Taken as adj. qualifying *Yajñeśvara* it means : Viṣṇu who out of grace, accepted the excellent receptacle of presents from Dakṣa. But VR.'s interpretation is better : 'Viṣṇu who is the best of all the means which lead to *puruṣārthas*'.

* As ŚR. points out, the following eulogy of Viṣṇu contains a variety of metres.

24. *pratiṣiddhya māyām* etc. : VJ. The word *Māyā* signifies inert, unintelligent *prakṛti* the material cause of the world and not unreal juggglery (*indrajālą*). The verse means : You have distanced the unintelligent Prakṛti. You have created Mahat (and other principles) and grossest bodies called Puruṣa from it. You are called Puruṣa as you are the inner-controller (*antar-yāmin*) of these bodies. The ignorant Māyā-vādins regard you affected by Prakṛti like the Jīva.

25. *sva-dhāmni* (i) In Vaikuṇṭha—JG.

(ii) Of the nature of the highest bliss—SD.

**(i) VJ.: It is through the gracious looks of Sadāśiva which blossomed (created) in us the real knowledge that the ritualistic act, viz, this sacrifice that we are performing, is an act of worshipping you. It leads to devotion and other pious qualities. This is logically proved by three

upādhi or *māyā*) ! Due to the curse of Nandīśvara[26], we were strongly attached to ritualistic duties, and we did not know your real nature. We have known this sacrifice (*yajña*) as your form—the sacrifice which is established by (and expounded in) the three Vedas[27]; which implies (i.e. creates) religious merit (*apūrva*); for the purpose (of accomplishing) which, the definite instructions for the arrangement of specific deities in specific places, have been laid down (Or for this purpose, you have assumed different forms such as Indra).

The assistant priests said :

28. Oh Lord (who affords protection to all)! This caravan of ignorant people who are overburdened with the heavy load of their body (misconceived as their Soul), and their house (mistaken as their own), and who are tormented with desires (passions), is traversing the path of *saṁsāra* (lit. path of births) which is devoid of any shelter; (and) is difficult to travel on account of great hardships; which is under the strict watch of the terrible serpent called Death (to devour) them; which has the (enticing) mirage of the objects of senses; which is full of pitfalls of pleasures and pains (and such pairs of opposites); which is fearful on account of carnivorous beasts in

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modes of proof, viz., *Pratyakṣa* (perception), *anumāna* (inference) and *āgama* (authoritative word or the Veda). For accepting the oblations due to you, but offered to gods like Brahmā etc., you dwell in them. This is the decisive proof.

You, being the Supreme God, are object of *apūrva* (merit) which accrues from the performance of sacrifice. We thought that the act of sacrifice is for Indra and other deities. Hence our ignorance about you.—VJ.

VC : When we did not comprehend your real nature, how can Dakṣa do so ? We knew the sacrifice only as your form.

GD : Due to the imprecation of Nandiśvara, we could not understand that you underlie the forms of the deities of Rudra etc. Hence we ignored Rudra's share in the sacrifice, and proceeded with it. Now we realize that it is you who have assumed all forms.

26. Vide Supra IV.2. 24-26.

27. *tri-vṛt*—(i) Vedas of which three *pramāṇas* (modes of proof) viz. *pratyakṣa* (apprehension by senses), *anumāna* and *āgama* (Vedic testimony) are given.—VJ.

the form of the wicked; and which is encircled by the wild fire of grief—when will this crowd resort to your feet for shelter ?

Rudra said :

29. Oh bestower of boons! Your excellent feet which confer all the *puruṣārthas* here (in this very world), are definitely worthy of worship with reverence, even by the sages who are not attached to worldly pleasures. I have fixed my mind on your feet. Even, if the ignorant people call me an apostate (fallen from the path of established rules of conduct), I do not mind it due to your supreme grace.

Bhṛgu said :

30. Brahmā and other embodied beings have been deprived of their knowledge of Ātman by your mysterious Māyā. They sleep (i.e. are immersed) in the darkness of ignorance, and do not even now comprehend your real nature lying within them (as *antar-yāmin*). May you, who are the Soul and friend of your suppliants, be gracious unto me.

Brahmā said :

31. What man perceives through his sense-organs which cognize difference between the objects, is not your (real) nature. You are the basis of knowledge, the objects of senses and the (three) *guṇas*, you are (hence) quite distinct from the illusory phenomenon of Māyā.

*Indra said** :

32. Oh Acyuta! Even this form of yours which creates the world and which is delightful to the mind and the eyes, is a real one (even though it is perceptible)—your form which is distinguished with eight mighty arms holding weapons in readiness, to destroy the enemies of gods.

The wives of the Priests said :

33. (In days of yore) the institution of sacrifice was established by god Brahmā as your worship. It has been now

*According to ŚR. here Indra contradicts Brahmā by stating that the form of Viṣṇu that is visible to them is real even though it is perceived through a sense-organ.

ruined by Paśupati (Śiva) out of his ire against Dakṣa. Therefore, Oh embodiment of sacrifice, be pleased to sanctify with your lotuslike charming eyes, this sacrifice of ours which has been made (desolate) like a cremation-ground devoid of joy and auspiciousness.

The sages said :

34. Inscrutable are your ways, Oh Lord, for you perform an act of your own accord but are not affected thereby. People worship the Supreme goddess Lakṣmī for their prosperity. But you do not think highly of her, though she waits upon you of her own accord.

Siddhas said :

35. This elephant in the form of our mind which is scorched in the forest-conflagration of afflictions, and is distressed by the thirst (of sensual pleasures/desires) has plunged in the pure, nectarlike river of your stories. It does not (even) remember the wild-fire of *saṁsāra*. Nor does it come out of it like one who has attained Brahman.

Dakṣa's wife said :

36. Oh Lord! Auspicious (indeed) is your appearance here. Please be gracious unto us. I bow to you. Oh Lord of Śrī (Lakṣmī), may you and your consort Lakṣmī protect us. Oh Supreme Lord, a sacrifice, though complete in all its parts (e.g. *prayāja*, *anuyāja*), does not appear beautiful (i.e. really complete), like the trunk of a man without its head.

Guardians of the worlds said :

37*. Are you (in your real form) seen (by us) with our

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*The different interpretations are interesting :

(i) ŚR. : To those of pure heart, you appear in pure *sāttvic* form. But to us whose senses can look externally only you are simply a *jīva* invested with a material body of five elements. You (i.e. your real form) are not perceptible to our senses. Fie upon our life !

(ii) VR. : The attribute *bhūman* (all pervasive) distinguishes the Lord from *jīva* which is atomic in size (*aṇu-svarūpa*) and also from *prakṛti*. "It is due to your mystical power called *māyā* that *ātman* and the material body are falsely regarded as one, and *jīva* is wrongly taken to be identical

eyes (senses) which can perceive things in the wrong light?[28] (No) you are the seer from within (as *antaryāmin*) by whom the phenomenal world is seen. For, Oh infinite Lord (*bhūman*), it is certainly your Māyā that you appear to be (as if) the sixth (*jīva*) associated with the (material body composed of) five *bhūtas* (elements).

Yogeśvaras (Masters of Yoga) said :

38*. Oh Lord! There is none who is more beloved to You than he, who does not see (regard) himself different from You, the Para Brahman (lit. the *ātman* of the universe). However, Oh merciful Lord, please be gracious to those (Your devotees) who resort to You with unswerving devotion (like loyal servants to their masters).

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with the Lord (*Īśa*). You are different from *jīva* and *acit* (five *bhūtas*) but you appear as the sixth (i.e. *jīva*) due to your *māyā*".

(iii) VJ.'s alternative explanation : Oh how lucky we are that you who can be apprehended with the divine eye (of knowledge), are visible to our sight.

(iv) VC. : Though you are the Seer, it is through your Grace that you can be seen. The apprehension of our senses which are accustomed to grasp their objects, is not real. It is your Māyā that you appear to be vested with material body with you as the sixth (distinct from the five *bhūtas*). Jarāsandha and others who thought your real form (Śrī-vigraha) to be material, have not seen your real self, though they have just seen you, for they remained impervious to your sweetness.

(v) GD. : The sense organs are incapable of apprehending you. It is your Will due to which you became visible to us.

28. *asad-grahaiḥ*—(i) By us who are strongly attached to body and its belongings, and who look upon the body as the *ātman*—VR.

(ii) By our eyes or senses which are habituated to apprehend inauspicious sounds, objects etc.—VD.

(iii) By senses which comprehend their objects—VC.

(iv) By senses, mind, intelligence (and other *vṛttis*) which have attachment to this transient *saṁsāra*—SD.

*(1) RR. and VD. clarify that devotees (servants of God) are more dear to him than mere possessors of knowledge (*jñānin*).

(2) VR. accepts the v.l. *bhṛtyeśatayā* for ŚR.'s *bhakteśatayā*, and points out that 'master-servant relation' given here conflicts with the interpretation which supports the identification of the *jīva* with God, as such identity between *jaḍa* and *ajaḍa* is sheerly impossible. Thus VR. interprets : There is none more dear to you than he who does not regard himself existing independently of you, and who sees that he is a part of Lord's body, as such his existence is inseparable from God.

39*. By means of your Māyā in which are exhibited many and different varieties of *guṇas* by the destiny (*adṛṣṭa*) of the *jīvas*, you give rise to a notion of diversity about yourself (by assuming the form of Brahmā, Viṣṇu etc.) for the creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe. But in your own real, essential state, you are free from the illusive notion of difference and its cause, the *guṇas*. We bow to you who are such.

Brahmā (Śabda-brahman or Vedas) said :

40. I pay my obeisance to you who have assumed the *sattva* attribute and are (hence) the source of (*puruṣārthas* like) Dharma (*artha* etc.), but are still destitute of attributes. Yur real nature is incomprehensible to me as well as to others.

Agni said :

41. I, whose flames are brightly enkindled by your light, bear the offerings soaked in ghee, in every good sacrifice. I bow to you who are sacrifice incarnate, and the protector of sacrifices—you who are five-fold in form[29] and are duly worshipped by five hymns[30] of the *Yajurveda*.

The gods said :

42. You, the first Puruṣa who, formerly, at the end of the kalpa, withdrew in your stomach the universe which is the

(3) SD. : (the first half). Those who know that *jīvas* who are your parts (*aṁśas*) are different *inter se* and from you, and that they are still not different from you as you are the Soul of the universe (and an *aṁśin*), are dearest to you.

*VR. : Obeisance to you who have given rise to differentiation about the Soul (*ātman*) such as god, man etc. through your Māyā. Your Māyā assumes the forms of Brahmā, Śiva etc. with you abiding in them. Your essential nature always keeps away the attributes (e.g. *sattva* etc.) which lead to misapprehension.

29. The five forms of sacrifice are : (i) *Agnihotra*, *darśa*, *Pūrṇamāsa*, *Cāturmāsya* and *Paśusoma* (ŚR., VC., SD., GD.).

(ii) VR. lists : *Dakṣiṇa*, *Āhavanīya*, *Gārhapatya*, *Sabhya* and *Āvasathya*. (iii) VJ. enumerates : *Yajña*, *Yajña puruṣa*, *Yajñeśa*, *Yajña-bhāvana* and *Yajñabhuj*, as the five forms.

30. The five hymns mentioned are : *śrāvaya*, *śrauṣat*, *yaja*, *ye yajāmahe* and *Vaṣaṭ*.

effect caused by you, lie down on the excellent bed of Śeṣa (the king of serpents), over the cosmic waters (after the deluge). You, the path of realizing whom is sought after by the Siddhas in their hearts, today move in the range of our sight and protect us, your servants.

Gandharvas said :

43. Oh God, these progenitors like Marīci and others, the hosts of gods like Brahmā, Indra and others of whom Rudra is the foremost, are merely the parts of your part (manifestation), Oh highest Lord! We always pay obeisance to you whom this universe is a toy-box.

Vidyādharas said :

44. Oh Lord, (even) after entering into the human body which is the means of (attaining) the (highest human) objective, viz. *Mokṣa*, a person thinks his material body as 'I' and 'mine' due to Your Māyā. This wicked-minded fool hankers after the unreal pleasures of the senses, even though he is reproached by his relatives. He who drinks the nectar in the form of stories about you, will be able to shake off the delusion about his body.

The Brāhmaṇas said :

45. You are the Sacrifice. You are the sacrificial offering. You are the sacrificial fire. You are certainly the incantations (sacred *Mantras* recited at the time of offering the oblations to fire), the sacrificial fuel, the *darbha* grass, and sacrificial utensils. You are the *sadasya* and the *ṛtvij* (the superintending and officiating priests forming the assembly at the sacrifice). You are the couple (the sacrificer, and his wife), the divinities (to be propitiated in the sacrifice), the *agnihotra* (the act of offering oblations to fire), the *Svadhā* the sacred oblations offered to *Pitṛs*), the Soma juice, the clarified butter (to be offered to the sacrificial fire) and the sacrificial animal.

46. Oh Lord, whose body is constituted of three Vedas, you are the embodiment of sacrifice (and of the will and the activity of the performance of sacrifice. Formerly you assumed the form of a mighty boar. While Yogins were eulogizing you, you, with a roar, sportively brought the earth on your

tusk (to the surface of waters), from the Rasātala, just as a big elephant would playfully do to a lotus plant.

47. May you (who are) of so great a glory, be gracious unto us, who long to see you, as our auspicious undertaking (of performing sacrifice) is interrupted. Oh Lord of Sacrifices, when your name is sung by men, all obstacles to sacrifices vanish. To you we offer our obeisance.

Maitreya said :

48. Oh blessed Vidura ! While Viṣṇu the protector of sacrifices was being eulogized, the wise Dakṣa recommenced the performance of the sacrifice that was interrupted by Rudra (Vīrabhadra).

49. Oh sinless Vidura ! The Lord who is within all (as *antaryāmin*) and (thus) the enjoyer of the oblations offered to all, expressed pleasure at the offering of his share (of *tri-puro-ḍāśa*). Addressing Dakṣa, He said :

The Lord said :

50*. I am the prime cause of the universe. I am its Soul and the Lord[31] and the witness (of all). I am the self-refulgent one, not subject to any condition (*upādhi*)[32]. I am Brahmā and Rudra (the creator and destroyer of the universe).

51**. Oh Brāhmaṇa (Dakṣa), having entered my own Māyā constituted of three Guṇas, it is I, who create, protect

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*The gist of VR.'s lengthy commentary is as follows:

I, Brahmā and Śiva (the latter two) who constitute my body and who have (thus) no independent existence, (as I am their *antaryāmin*) are the cause of the world. I am the Lord of myself and abide as the controller from within, in all *jīvas* (*ātmeśvara*). Being bereft of name or form (as a god or a man) I am simply a witness or onlooker (*upadraṣṭā*). I am free from the defects or limitations of *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa* such as lack of intelligence, limitedness, affliction. (*aviśeṣaṇa* is not a negative concept as the Lord is) *svayaṁ-dṛk*—possessor of all excellent attributes.

31. *ātmeśvara*—(i) The Lord of all *jīvas*—VJ.

(ii) Having none superior or Lord to him—SD.

32. *aviśeṣaṇaḥ*—(i) The best of all (*sarvottama*)—VJ.

(ii) With nobody equal or superior to me—SD.

(iii) Free from all attachment—GD.

**(1) VR. : I alone am the cause of the effect called universe consisting of *cid* (sentient) and *acid* (non-sentient). By my will, I enter my

and destroy the universe, and assume the name (Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra) suitable for the function.

52. It is only the ignorant persons who view Brahmā, Rudra and all creatures as distinct from me who am the one Brahman without a second (either of the same or different kind, and who am the absolute, the Supreme Soul (*paramātman*).

53*. Just as a man never entertains the idea that his own limbs like head, hands etc. belong to others, similarly a person devoted to me does not regard other creatures as distinct from him.

54**. Oh Brāhmaṇa ! He who sees no difference between the three (Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva) who are essentially one and who are the Souls (*antaryāmins*) of all creatures, attains real peace (*Mokṣa*).

Maitreya said :

55. Thus enlightened by the Lord (Viṣṇu), Dakṣa, the foremost among the Prajāpatis (first) worshipped Hari by his special sacrifice (*tri-kapāla-puroḍāśa*), and (then) other gods

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Māyā and protect the world, and create it through Brahmā, and destroy it through Rudra. I assume the names Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva according to the function performed.

(2) VJ. : I enter the unintelligent Prakṛti under my control. With *rajo-guṇa* as the material cause, I create Brahmā, enter into and abide in him and create the world . . . . In this way, by my form as Viṣṇu and my *aṁśas* in Brahmā and Rudra, I carry on the functions of the creation etc. It is a wrong notion that Brahmā or Rudra creates or destroys the universe.

(3) SD. : God is essentially free from *vikāras*. His modifications etc. are due to his Śakti. It is by means of his *aṁśa* that the creation etc. take place, and God assumes the particular name suitable for the function.

*VR : Even a man who wrongly identifies his body with his Soul, does not regard that the limbs of his body (which cannot exist independently of his body) as belonging to another person or have an existence apart from his body. Similarly, a person devoted to me, does not think that creatures can have an existence independent of me (*Brahman*).

**VR tries to interpret this verse as supporting the tenets of the Viśiṣṭādvaita school. The gist of his lengthy erudite Com. is as follows :

'The existence of the three (Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra) is dependent upon Viṣṇu who is really independent and exists by himself, and the existence of Brahmā and Rudra is in Viṣṇu's power.

also in both ways (i.e. through principal and secondary types of sacrifices).

56. With a concentrated mind, he waited upon Rudra, by offering the share due to him (viz. the remains of the sacrifice). By performing the concluding rite called *udavasāna*, he offered oblations to gods who were eligible to drink Soma and also to others. Thus, after completely performing the sacrifice, he (Dakṣa) along with the priests (participants in the sacrifice), performed the sacred ablution called *avabhṛtha*.

57. Even though Prajāpati Dakṣa attained Siddhis (divine powers or knowledge) by his own merits, the divinities blessed him with devotion to Dharma only and returned to heaven.

58. We hear that Satī, the daughter of Dakṣa cast off her previous body, was born of Menā, the wife of Himavān (the presiding deity of the Himālayas).

59. Just as Śakti (the Divine Power) which lies asleep (dormant, during the period of *Pralaya*) again resorts to Puruṣa (God, at the beginning of creation), Ambikā (Satī, of the previous life) who was devoted to Rudra exclusively as her only resort[33], sought again the same beloved (Rudra) as her husband.

60. This deed of Lord Śambhu (Śiva) who destroyed Dakṣa's sacrifice, was heard by me from Uddhava, the great devotee of the Lord and the disciple of Bṛhaspati (preceptor of gods).

61. Oh Vidura (descendant of Kuru), a person who, every day, devotedly listens to and recounts this sanctifying work of the Supreme Lord (Rudra)—the work which enhances glory, confers longevity and purges all sins—shakes off sin (of himself and his listener).

62*. Oh Vidura, Śiva again obtained as his wife Satī, (now) the daughter of Menā. God Śiva enjoyed himself with her for a hundred years.

63. Realizing that she is incapable of bearing his semen, Dhūrjaṭi (Śiva) discharged it out into the sky, and the river Gaṅgā bore it.

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33. *ekagatim* : VR. takes this as adj. qualifying Rudra : 'Rudra who was brooding over her only'.

*The verses 62-65 are commented upon by VJ. only.

64. (Finding the Gaṅgā too weak to bear it), Agni swallowed it (through *svāhā*) into a bush of reeds. There was born god Kumāra whom the six Kṛttikās (the stars constituting the Pleiades) adopted as their son.

65. By sucking their milk with six mouths, the child came to be known as Ṣaṇmukha (six-faced god). The gods then appointed him—the terror of all Asuras,—as the commander of their army.

CHAPTER EIGHT

*(Story of Dhruva)**

Maitreya said :

1. Sanaka and others (viz. Sanandana, Sanātana and Sanatkumāra), Nārada, Ṛbhu, Haṁsa, Aruṇa and Yati—these sons of Brahmā did not take to the life of a householder, and observed life-long celibacy.

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* From the 8th verse of this chapter, we find the famous story of Dhruva, so popular in Purāṇas and later literature. V.S. Agrawala (*MP—a Study* 58-9) traces this story to RV. X. 72.3-4. Agrawala interprets it as 'the Sun', while Siddheshwar Shastri Chitrav takes it to mean 'the tree' (*RV. Marathi translation*, p. 671). In MBH, Dhruva is a holy name which if remembered, wards off difficulties (*Anuśāsana*. 150.78). The *Vā. P.* (2.62.75-83) briefly refers to the story of Dhruva of the Cākṣusa Manvantara, but therein, it is god Brahmā and not Viṣṇu who confers on him the eternal astral position. The nucleus of the story of Dhruva in the Bh. P. is obviously the one given in *V.P.* I. Chs. 11 and 12. But there are some important differences. For example :

(1-2) In the *VP.*, Nārada plays no part in Dhruva's spiritual guidance. The seven sages initiate Dhruva with the *mantra* : *Om namo Vāsudevāya* and *Not Om namo bhagavate Vāsudevāya* as given in the *Bh. P.* (vide verse 54).

(3) In the *VP.* 1.12.13-30, gods tried to disturb Dhruva's meditation by their Māyā. In the *Bh. P.* there is no such distraction.

(4) The eulogy of Viṣṇu sung by Dhruva in the *VP* 1.12.53.75 is a Paurāṇic version of the *Puruṣa Sūkta* (RV.X.90). But the beautiful classic eulogy in the *Bh. P.* IV.9.6-17 is quite independent.

The *Bh. P.* seems to have revised and enlarged the story of Dhruva as given in the *V.P.*

2. Oh Vidura (destroyer of enemies), Adharma's wife, by name Mṛṣā (falsehood) gave birth to a twin—Dambha (Hypocrisy) and Māyā (deceit). Nirṛti (the Evil spirit presiding over the South-West) who was childless adopted that couple (as Dambha married his sister Māyā).

3. Oh man of great wisdom (Vidura)! To them (Dambha and Māyā) were born Lobha (Avarice) and Nikṛti (Wickedness). Of these (Lobha and Nikṛti) were born Krodha (Anger) and Hiṁsā (Violence); of these again (were born) Kali (Quarrel) and his sister Durukti (Abusive language).

4. Kali begot Bhaya (Fear) and (the daughter) Mṛtyu (Death) through Durukti. Of this couple (Bhaya and Mṛtyu) was born a twin, viz. Niraya (Hell) and Yātanā (Extreme tortures), Oh righteous-most Vidura.

5. Oh sinless one! I have described to you briefiy the *Pratisarga* (secondary creation or the crèation that leads to *Pralaya*). Having heard this sacred account thrice, one shakes off the impurities from his Soul.

6. Oh Scion of Kuru! I shall now describe the race of Svāyambhuva Manu of sacred renown, born from the part of (Brahmā who himself was) Hari's *aṁśa* (part).

7. Priya-vrata and Uttāna-pāda, the sons of Manu, the consort of Śatarūpā, were engaged in the protection of the world, as they were endowed with an *aṁśa* (a part of protective energy) of Lord Vāsudeva.

8. Uttānapāda had two wives—Sunīti and Suruci. (Of the two) Suruci was more beloved of her lord, and not the other (Sunīti) whose son was Dhruva.

9. One day, while the king was fondling Suruci's son Uttama by placing him on his lap, he did not like Dhruva who also wished to climb up his (Uttānapāda's) lap.

10. To Dhruva, her co-wife's son who was thus trying to climb (his father's lap), the extremely proud Suruci jealously spoke, while the king was listening :

11. 'Oh child, even though you are the king's son, you do not deserve to ascend the royal throne, as you were not borne by me, in my womb.

12. It is a pity that you are but a child, and you do

not verily know that you were borne in another woman's womb. Hence you desire for an unattainable object.

13. If you cherish a desire fór the king's throne, you propitiate the Lord (*Puruṣa*) by penance, and by His grace, get yourself borne in my womb (secure birth as my son)."

Maitreya said :

14. Being cut to the quick by the harsh words of his stepmother, Dhruva, like a serpent beaten with a stick, heaved heavy sighs with anger. Leaving his father who was merely looking on tongue-tied, he went away crying to his mother.

15. Sunīti took up on her lap, the child which was (heavily) sighing with quivering lips. She was extremly distressed to hear from the inmates of the harem, the words of her co-wife.

16. Being scorched by grief like a forest creeper by the (encircling) forest conflagration, the young queen lost her heart and wept bitterly. Remembering the words of her co-wife, tears flowed out from her lotuslike beautiful eyes.

17. Heaving long sighs, and being unable to see the end of the misery (miserable state), the young lady spoke to her child, "Oh child! Do not blame others for the misery. A person experiences the same suffering which he has inflicted on others.

18. What Suruci said was true as you were borne in the womb of and were brought up with the milk of my unfortunate self whom the king is ashamed of recognising as his wife (nay even his maid servant).

19. Oh child! Remain above jealousy. Abide by the true path even though it is advised by your step-mother. If you desire the highest seat (throne) like Uttama, propitiate the feet of Adhokṣaja (god Viṣṇu).

20. It is by worshipping the lotuslike feet of Lord Viṣṇu who has assumed the *sattva guṇa* for the protection of the universe, that god Brahmā attained to the position of parameṣṭhin (the most exalted among gods), which is worthy of being bowed to by sages, who have controlled their minds and breath.

21. So also, your grandfather, the venerable Manu, with complete faith in him as the *antaryāmin* of all, worshipped

him, by performing sacrifices with liberal sacrificial fees (*dakṣiṇā*). He obtained earthly and heavenly happiness, and the highest bliss in Mokṣa, unattainable by other means.

22. Oh child, resort to him who is kind to his servants (devotees), the path of whose lotuslike feet should be sought by people desirous of Liberation (Mokṣa). Adore the *Puruṣa* (Supreme Man) by firmly fixing him in your mind by being exclusively devoted to him, and purified by performance of righteous duties.

23. My child! I find none other than the lotus-eyed God who can redress your grievance. The Lord is sought after by goddess Lakṣmī with a lotus in her hand, but who herself is sought by all others (like god Brahmā etc.).

Maitreya said :

24. Having heard the words thus spoken out to him, guiding him how to attain his objective, Dhruva controlled his mind by his will power, and left his father's capital.

25. When Nārada heard this and came to know what he (Dhruva) desired to do, he touched his (Dhruva's) head with his purifying hand, and said to himself in wonder :

26. "Oh, how wonderful is the spirit of the Kṣatriyas who cannot put up with the loss of respect; for even though (Dhruva) is but a child, he has taken to heart, the vile speech of the step-mother."

Nārada said (to Dhruva) :*

26.A "Oh child! Where are you going alone leaving behind your home full of prosperity ? I can perceive, Oh child, that you are indignant at the insulting treatment (meted out to you) by your own relatives."

Dhruva said :

26B. "Did you perceive this, Sir, by your power of contemplation developed by Yoga ?[34] I cannot console my heart which is wounded by the words of Suruci."

* 26 A and 26 B are additional verses in the text of the Bh. P. commented by VR. and VJ.

34. You have seen everything by your Yogic power born of contemplation. Although you can perceive everything, I, however, tell it to you. —VJ.

Nārada said :

27. Oh child, we do not find that (the sense of) honour or dishonour is developed now (at this early stage) in a child (like you), who is (normally and) naturally fond of play and (such) other things.

28* Even though the sense of distinction between honour and dishonour is developed, there are no other causes of dissatisfaction and misery for a man except his misapprehension. For in this world, people are different in their weal and woe as a result of their (past) *karmas*.

29. Therefore, observing the ways of the Almighty, a wise man should remain contented with whatever has been allotted to him by the Providence, Oh child.

30. Moreover, the Lord whose grace you aspire after by the path of *Yoga* as advised by your mother, is in my opinion, very difficult to be propitiated by men.

31. Though the sages have been seeking his path by intense *Yogic* meditation, and by remaining free from attachment through many births, they have not been able to find it.

32. Hence please return home. This persistence of yours is futile. You may try for your good (or final beatitude), at the proper time (viz. in advanced age).

* (1) VC : Insults or those who inflict them (upon us) are the creations of our misapprehension. From the point of *jñāna-yogins*, the *vikalpa* (the difference between honour and dishonour) being non-existent, the misery (resulting from mal-treatment) or the persons who cause it have no existence. In the case of *bhaktas* (*bhakti-yogins*) and *karma-yogins*, they consider that as everything in this world happens according to our past *karmas*, they should not blame anybody else except their own fate.

(2) In the first half VR. prefers to read *vikalpe avidya-māne'pi* instead of *vidyamane'pi* : In the same *ātman* there is no difference of categories like man, god etc. But it is the false identification of *ātman* with the body (of man, god etc.) which causes dissatisfaction.

In the later half :VR. prefers to read *lokāḥ* for *loke*. *Lakas* i.e. sentient beings are different (as men, gods etc) as a consequence of their past *karmas*.

(3) VJ. affirms that there is a difference in the world as friend or foe; but it is due to misapprehension that dissatisfaction or troubles to mind are caused. People are different from each other, according to their past actions (*karmas*).

33. An embodied being, who reconciles himself to the pleasure or pain (happiness or misery) meted out to him by Providence, reaches the end of the darkness of ignorance (i.e. attains *Mokṣa*).

34. One should feel delighted to see a person of superior merits; should feel compassion to one who is inferior; and should desire friendship with one's equals. (In this way) one is not overwhelmed with afflictions.

Dhruva said :

35. This path of tranquillity has been graciously shown by your venerable Self, to persons whose hearts are affected with pleasure and pain. But it is beyond the ken of persons like us.

36. It, however, does not dwell (i.e. impress) in my heart which is shattered by sharp arrow-like words of Suruci—heart of mine who am undisciplined, and have inherited terrible martial (*Kṣatriya*) spirit.

37. Oh Brāhmaṇa (sage Nārada), I desire to secure (lit. conquer) a place which is the highest and the most exalted of all in the worlds, and which had never been attained either by forefathers or anybody else. Be pleased to tell me a good path (leading to it).

38. You are the son of the Lord Parameṣṭhin (Brahmā). Certainly it is for welfare of the world, that your honour roam over (the world) like the Sun, playing on (your) *Vīṇā* (lute).

Maitreya said :

39. Hearing this excellent reply, the venerable Nārada was pleased with the child. Out of compassion, he then spoke to him the (following) excellent words in reply.

Nārada said :

40. The path pointed out to you by your mother will verily lead to the highest good. The course is no other than Lord Vāsudeva. Adore him with a mind completely devoted to him.

41. If one wishes to be blest with good fortune known as Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Mokṣa (righteousness, wealth,

sense-pleasure and Liberation from Saṁsāra), worship of Hari's feet, is the only course for attaining it.

42. Therefore, Oh Child, God bless you ! You go to the holy bank of the Yamunā where there is the sacred Madhuvana which is ever permeated with Hari's presence.

43. You bathe in the holy waters of the Yamunā three times (morning, mid-day and evening) a day; perform religious duties (e.g. bowing to god) proper for (a child like) you; be steady in a suitable easy posture (like *Svastikāsana*) on a seat (of *Kuśa*-grass etc.).

44. Gradually remove the impurities fickleness etc. of *Prāṇa*, *Indriyas* (sense-organs) and the mind by threefold *Prāṇāyāma* (breath-control consisting of *Pūraka*, *Kumbhaka* and *Recaka*). With a steady and a concentrated mind, you should meditate upon Lord Hari.

45. Hari is disposed to show his grace. His face and eyes are ever graciously cheerful. He has a well-shaped nose, beautiful brows and charming cheeks. He is the most beautiful of all gods.

46. He is ever youthful with beautiful limbs, red lips and reddish eyes. He is the only resort of all suppliants (devotees), the dispenser of infinite happiness (or the reservoir of all *Puruṣārthas*, the protector and the ocean of mercy.

47. He is distinguished by the mark called Śrī-Vatsa. He possesses all the characteristics of the Supreme Man. He is dark blue like a cloud, and wears a Vanamālā (about his neck); and his four arms are distinguished with *Śaṅkha* (a conch), *Cakra* (a discus), *gadā* (a mace) and *Padma* (a lotus).

48. He is adorned with a crown, (a pair of) ear-rings, armlets and bracelets. His neck adds to the beauty of the *Kaustubha* gem. He wears yellow silken garments.

49. He wears a girdle furnished with small tinkling bells round his waist, and is adorned with anklets of burnished gold. He is extremely beautiful, serene, and enhancer of the delight of the mind and the eyes.

50. Having occupied the pericarp of the lotus in the form of his devotees' heart, with his feet beautified by a row of gemlike nails, he presents himself to the mind of his worshippers.

51. With a steady, concentrated mind, one should con-

template Hari, the formost among the bestowers of boons, as (having a) smiling (face) and looking with affection (to the devotees).

52. The mind which contemplates the extremely auspicious form of the Lord in this way, is soon filled with highest bliss[35] and does not revert (to *saṁsāra*).

53. Oh Prince, hear from me the most secret *mantra* (mystic formula to be continuously repeated mentally during meditation). Any person who repeats it for seven days (and nights) can see the heavenly beings (moving through the skies).

54. The Mantra is *Oṁ namo bhagavate Vāsudevāya* (salutation to venerable Vāsudeva who is the embodiment of *OM* or *praṇava*). Judging the appropriateness of the articles of worship with due regard to time and place, a wise man should perform the worship of the Lord with various material substances, repeating all the while this *Mantra*.

55. He should worship the Lord with sacred waters, garland of flowers, roots, fruits etc. found in forests, sprouts approved for worship (e.g. *durvā*-grass-blades), garments and leaves etc. of *Tulasī* so dear to the Lord.

56. Having secured an image of substances like stone or through the medium of the earth, water etc. as a substitute for the image, the sage should perform the worship of the Lord. He should be controlled in mind[36] and speech; should be serene and should subsist on moderate quantity of forest products (life fruit, roots etc.).

57. He should meditate upon the glorious deeds which the Lord of hallowing fame, will perform in the incarnations which He assumes at his will and pleasure, by the force of his incomprehensible Māyā.

58. Whatever articles (or forms) of worship are adopted by the ancients for his adoration, should be offered to the

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35. v.l. *nivṛtti* : renunciation. 'The mind is immediately filled with renunciation (of worldly objects)'.

36. v.l. *dṛḍhātmā*—with a devout mind—VR.

dhṛtātmā—One who has controlled his mind by withdrawing it from sensual pleasure.

Lord embodied in the Mantra, by means of repeating the same Mantra (of twelve letters).

59-60. When the Lord is thus being worshipped with body, speech and mind with acts of devotion, he enhances the Divine Love in men who properly perform his devotion sincerely. He confers upon them the bliss cherished by them as beneficial, in the form of Dharma, Artha etc.

61. He (the devotee) should be indifferent to sensual pleasures. With a highly intensive practice of *Bhakti-yoga* (path of devotion) and with his mind exclusively devoted to God, he should worship him directly for Liberation from *Saṁsāra.*

62. The Prince, who was thus advised, circumambulated Nārada. After bowing down to him (Nārada), he went to the holy Madhuvana which was adorned with Hari's footprints.

63. When Dhruva went to the forest for penance, the sage Nārada entered (Uttānapāda's) harem. He was received with due worship by the king. Seating himself comfortably, he spoke to the king.

Nārada said :

64. Oh King, what is it that you think about so long, with a withering face? Is there any deficiency in your *Dharma* (religious duties), *Artha* (wealth and prosperity) and *kāma* (fulfillment of desires)?

The King replied :

65. Oh sage My wise and noble son of five years has been exiled along with his mother by me, who became heartless due to my submissiveness to (her) co-wife.

66. Oh Sage May not the wolves prey upon my helpless child lying in the forest, fatigued and famished, with his lotus-like face faded.

67. What a pity! Look at the wickedness of a fellow like me who am under the thumb of a women. I am an extremely vile fellow, I did not welcome him while he affectionately wished to climb my lap.

Nārada said :

68. Oh King ! Do not worry about your child at all. He is protected by the Lord. You do not know his greatness. His glory will spread over the whole world.

69. Oh King! After achieving a feat difficult even for the Protectors of the world, your powerful son will soon return enhancing your glory.

Maitreya said:

70. Having thus heard the speech of the divine sage Nārada, the King Uttānapāda discarded his royal fortune and anxiously brooded over his son only.

71. There (in Madhuvana), Dhruva had his bath in the Yamunā. Remaining self-controlled, he fasted that night. With a concentrated mind, he worshipped the Supreme Man according to the instructions of the sage.

72. He passed one month in the worship of Hari, eating at the end of every third night fruits called *kapittha* (wood-apple) and *badara* (jujub), just enough to maintain his life.

73. The second month also he continued the worship of the Lord, eating every sixth day withered blades of grass, leaves etc.

74. He spent the third month in propitiating the Lord of hallowing fame, with perfectly concentrated mind, drinking water only, on every ninth day.

75. With perfect control over his breath, he passed the fourth month in contemplating the Lord, subsisting on the air, on every twelfth day.

76. When the fifth month arrived, the Prince controlled his life-breath and meditating upon Brahman (the Supreme being) stood motionless like a post.

77. He withdrew his mind which is the basis of the sense-organs and their objects from every side(external objects). He meditated upon the form of the Lord in his heart and perceived nothing else.

78. While he was having the *Dhāraṇā* (steadfast fixation of mind on the Supreme Brahman, the support of Mahat and other principles and the controller of Pradhāna and Puruṣa, all the three worlds began to shake.

79. When the child of the King (i.e. Dhruva) stood on one leg, the earth, being pressed down by his great toe, became semi-inclined to one side, as a ferry-boat carrying a big elephant does at every step, according as he raises his right or left leg.

80. Dhruva controlled his life-breath and the (working) of) his senses and began to meditate on Hari, the Soul of the universe as not being different from himself. While he was contemplating thus, the worlds along with their protecting deities became greatly distressed at the stoppage of their breath, and they resorted to Hari for refuge.

Gods said :

81. We do not know the reason of this sudden and simultaneous stoppage of breath of all beings, mobile and immobile. We have sought refuge under you who alone can afford shelter to us. Therefore save us from this calamity.

The Lord said :

82. Do not be afraid. I shall dissuade the child (Dhruva) from this austere penance. You return to your respective abodes. The son of King Uttānapāda has identified his Self with me (as the Soul of the universe). This has led to the stoppage of your breath.

CHAPTER NINE

Viṣṇu's boon and Dhruvā's Coronation.

Maitreya continued :

1. Gods, whose fears were thus dispelled, bowed down to Viṣṇu (God of very great valour or God of long strides in His Trivikrama form). When they returned to heaven, even Lord Viṣṇu (the Cosmic Man of thousand heads), being eager to see His devotee, sped to Madhu-vana riding on Garuḍa.

2. Verily, Dhruva found that the lightening-like brilliant form of the Lord which he visualized as manifested in the

lotus of his heart, due to his intellect sharpened by his intense yoga, suddenly disappeared. (Opening his eyes) he saw him standing outside in the same state (form).

3. Awed at his presence (lit. sight), the child bowed to him, bending down his body and prostrating himself before him like a stick. While looking at him, he was as if drinking him (with his eyes). He was, as if, kissing him with his mouth, and embracing, as it were, with his arms.

4. Hari who dwells in the heart of Dhruva as well as those of others, knew that the child which folded its palms before him, desired to praise him, but did not know how to express himself. Out of grace, He touched him on the cheek with his conch, the embodiment of the Veda.

5. Immediately (at the touch of Visnu's conch) Dhruva whose eternal abode was reserved, was inspired, with the divine speech and realized decisively the real nature of the Supreme Soul (*Brahman*) and the *jīva*. Being full of devotion and love, he calmly (and without faltering) began to praise the Lord whose great glory is heard everywhere.

Dhruva said :

6. Salutations to you, Venerable Lord, the *antaryāmin* of all. You are the Lord of all powers. Having entered into me by your power of intelligence, you reactivate the power of my speech which was lying dormant, and enliven the activities of my (cognitive and conative) sense organs like hands, feet, ears, tactile sense and others.

7. Oh Lord! You are really only one. Having created the entire universe consisting of *Mahat* and other principles by your power called Māyā consisting of *guṇas* of infinite varieties, you enter as *an antaryāmin* (Inner[38] Controller) in it, and appear as many in the apparent *guṇas* of Māyā (in the

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37. *sva-dhāmnā*—(i) By your will power and knowledge—VR.
(ii) By your being *antar-yāmin*
v.l. *sva-dhāmnaḥ*—VR.'s Text. : Prāṇas and sense-organs wherein Paramātman abides.

38. *Puruṣa—antaryāmin* (Inner Controller)—ŚR., VC., GD.
Jīva-śarīrakaḥ/ God dwelling in *Jīva*—VR.
One who abides in the body—VJ.

form of the presiding deities of organs of senses), just as the fire (though one) appears of different forms in relation to the different shapes and sizes of the wood (fuel).

8. Oh Lord! God Brahmā has completely submitted to you for refuge. By the knowledge conferred by you, he saw (i.e. created this universe like a man awakened from sleep. Oh friend of the distressed? How can your feet which are the shelter of the liberated persons, be forgotten by one who is grateful to your benevolent acts (such as resuscitating all the sense-organs etc.).

9. Your Māyā has really deluded their intelligence who worship you—a veritable wish-yielding tree (capable of) liberating persons from the cycle of births and deaths—for other purpose, and desire physical pleasures enjoyable by this body which is as good as a corpse—pleasures which men can get even in the hell.

10. Oh Lord! The bliss that embodied beings enjoy from meditating upon your lotus-like feet, or from listening to the stories of your devotees, is not available in the Brahman who is essentially blissful. How can it be enjoyed by beings who fall from the celestial cars struck down by the sword of Death.

11. Oh Infinite Lord! Bless me with the intimate companionship of those great persons, who bear constant devotion to you, and are of pure (desireless) heart. Thereby, being intoxicated with drinking the nectar in the form of stories about your honour's excellent attributers, I shall easily cross[39] the terrible ocean of *saṁsāra*, teeming with great calamities.

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* VJ. construes differently: The bliss is not enjoyable by the *Jīva* who is in contact with Brahman by meditation etc.—Brahman whose greatness lies in its absolute independence. There is no need to speak of persons who, having attained the heaven (*Svarga*), move in the celestial cars, for the heaven is subject to destruction by the impending sword of Kāla or death.

39. *negye* : (i) VJ. notes a pun here (1) Cross over and (II) shall not return to (*na+igye*).

(ii) VC. & VD. : defeat, overcome. Just as the god of death cannot touch a person who has drunk nectar, the ocean of *saṁsāra* dare not affect me who am drunk with your nectarlike stories.

12.* Oh Lord with a lotus in the navel! Those who closely associate themselves with (your devotees) whose hearts are longing for the fragrance (excellent attributes) of Your lotuslike feet, do not remember (even) their mortal frame which is extremely dear to them, much less their sons, friends houses, wealth and wives which are connected with it.

13.* Oh unborn Lord! I know only your grossest form (the *Virāṭ rūpa*) consisting of the world teeming with beasts, trees, birds, reptiles, gods, demons human beings etc.—the world characterised by *sat* and *asat* and produced by a number of principles like *Mahat*. I do not know, Oh Supreme Lord, your other form which is beyond this, where speech and mind cannot reach.

14. I bow to that glorious Lord, the Supreme Man, who at the end of Kalpa (at the time of the dissolution of the universe) withdraws this entire universe in his stomach. He, the friend of Ananta (the serpent Śeṣa) turns his eyes (inwards) upon him self (in *Yoga-nidrā—Yogic* sleep), and lies (asleep) on his coils. It is in the interior part of the gold lotus (comprising all worlds) which sprouted in the oceanlike navel of the Lord, that the resplendent god Brahmā appeared.

15. (As contrasted with the *jīva*) you are the eternally free, absolutely pure, omniscient, intelligent spirit, essentially unchangeable, First Person (existing before the creation and

* VJ. construes the first half differently :

Those who think of their own sons, friends, house, wealth, and wives, do not remember you who are (really) the dearest of all and who are the First Being.

* VR. takes objection to ŚR's interpretation as he is knowable by Śāstras. He combines *na-yatra-vādaḥ*, and separates *param-a-vedmina*, and interprets : 'Not that I cannot, by your grace, comprehend your subtle form about which there is a controversy. . .' VR. gives another interpretation of *na-yatra-vādaḥ*—'The controversy whether it is *prākṛta* (produced of *Prakṛti*) does dot arise'.

(ii) VJ. adopts the v.l. *na-yatra-vācaḥ* and explains :

It is not possible for me to know your subtle form which the goddess of speech (which implies Lakṣmī, Brahmā and other divinities) who sees him everyday, cannot comprehend due to his infiniteness.

SD. states : I do not know fully even your gross form. Need it be said that I cannot comprehend your subtle form ?

after the dissolution of the universe), possessor of divine attributes, and the controller of the triad (of guṇas or worlds or Vedas or divisions of time.). For you are the seer of the different states of the mind by your unobstructed vision. For the maintenance of the universe, you stay as (Viṣṇu) the presiding deity of sacrifices. You are thus totally distinct from *jīva*

16.* I take resort to you who are that *Para Brahman* in whom various powers of contradictory character, such as knowledge and others, incessantly yet causelessly manifest themselves in succession—that *Para Brahman* who is the cause of the universe, the indivisible whole[40], infinite, beginningless and endless, of purely blissful nature and unchangeable.

17. Oh Lord! You are the embodiment of the highest bliss. To those who are devoted to you that way (without cherishing any desires), your lotuslike feet themselves are the real blessings which are far superior to other worldly boons such as sovereignty and others. Oh noble Lord, you are however, so eager to confer your grace that like a mother-cow which nourishes and protects (against wolves etc.) its newly born calf, Your Lor hip protects us, your miserable devotees, who cherish worldly desire.

Maitreya said :

18. Verily, on being thus highly extolled by the intelligent (Dhruva) of noble heart (intent), the Lord who loves his devotees, applauded him and spoke thus.

The Lord said :

19. Oh Young prince, I know what you cherish in your heart. You are a strict observer of religious vows. May you

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* (i) Mutually contradictory potencies exist in their qualitative capacity in the Lord, and they *carry out* their different functions in proper order—JG.

(ii) The lord is the receptacle of mutually exclusive powers. But they manifest themselves *in due succession* for the maintenance of world order (e.g. creation, sustenance, dissolution etc.)—VR.

40. *akam*—who is both the material and efficient cause, the protector and destroyer of the universe—VR.

be blessed. I bestow on you your cherished object even though it is unattainable (to others).

20. Oh blessed one, (I confer to you) that resplendent eternal place which is not attained to by anyone else. On it is based the entire circle of stellar luminaries like planets, stars and constellations of stars.

21. The circle of luminous bodies like stars etc. are fastened to the eternal post offered to Dhruva like a team of oxen to the central post in the threshing ground. The place given to Dhruva will survive even the destruction of three worlds in intermediate *Kalpas*. The stars presided over by Dharma, Agni and others and those by seven sages (*Ursa Major*) revolve round it (always) keeping it to their right.

22. When, at the time of his retirement to the forest, your father makes over (the kingdom of) the earth to you, you who are firmly established in *Raja-Dharma*, and with your senses (faculties) unimpaired, will protect the earth for a period of thirty-six thousand years.

23. When your brother Uttama is missing in a hunting expedition, his mother, brooding over him in mind, will enter a forest-conflagration while in search for him in the jungle.

24. As you know it, Sacrifice is my beloved form. Having, worshipped me by performance of a number of sacrifices with liberal *dakṣiṇas* (sacrificial fees), and having enjoyed here the real blessings, you will fix your heart on me, at the end.

25. Then, you will attain to my place which is bowed to by all the worlds and which is above that of the sages (*Ursa Major*)—a place from which there is no return (*to saṁsāra*).

Maitreya said :

26. Lord Viṣṇu (whose banner is Garuḍa), who was

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* It (this eternal place) continues to exist even after the destruction of those who live for a Kalpa. Just as a team of oxen employed to thrash out corn by trampling over it, is fastened to a post in the middle of the thrashing ground, and the bulls go round it, the stars presided over by Dharma, Agni, Kaśyapa, Śukra (Venus) and the forest dwelling sages (*Ursa Major*) along with stars and constellations, revolve round it, keeping it to their right. (SD).

worshipped (by Dhruva) promised to give his own realm (to him), and returned to his own abode, while the boy stood gazing in wonder.

27. Although he got his wishes gratified by obtaining his cherished object through the service of the feet of god Viṣṇu, Dhruva was not very much pleased. He also returned to the city (his father's capital).

Vidura asked :

28. How is it that Dhruva, who knew the real (value of) *Puruṣārthas*, regarded himself as unsuccessful in obtaining them even when, within (the period of) a single birth he secured the promise of the supreme abode of Hari, by worshipping his feet—a place extremely difficult to attain to by persons actuated with desires.

Maitreya replied :

29. Dhruva whose heart was pierced with sharp arrow-like words of his step-mother, (pointedly), remembered those words, and did not desire to attain the Final beatitude from the Lord who confers *Mukti* (Liberation). Hence, he became full of regrets (as the bitterness about his step-mother disappeared at the Lord's blissful presence.)

Dhruva said (*to himself*) :

30. I attained within a period of six months the asylum of the Lord's feet which life-long celibates like Sananda and others could realize by Yogic meditation extending over a span of many lives (i.e. births). Alas ! I, whose mind was fixed on diversity (or on worldly pleasures), have receded from them.

31. Oh ! Look at the folly of a luckless fellow like me. Alas ! Having reached the feet of the Lord who can terminate *saṁsāra* (the cycle of births and deaths), I begged for what was ephemeral.

32. My judgment was possibly deluded by jealous gods who attain to positions lower than mine[41]. Hence, I, the

41. Or : who are to fall from their position as gods.

wicked-most fellow, did not follow the true and salutary advice of Nārada.

33* I became deluded by Divine Māyā. Like sleeping man experiencing (fear at the sight of tigers etc. in) dreams while (in reality) there is nobody else (except the dreamer), I entertained a perverted view—a notion of difference[42], even though the second is non-existent (i.e. only the *ātman* exists everywhere—one, without a second), and mistaking my brother as an enemy, I got afflicted at heart with jealousy.

34. In vain have I solicited this kingdom of the world or eternal astral position, (as it is) like the medical treatment administered to a person whose life has ended. Having propitiated by penance, the Soul of the Universe who is so very difficult to propitiate, and who alone is capable of terminating the *saṁsāra*, I, a luckless fellow, begged of him *saṁsāra* only.

35. Alas ! From the Supreme Lord who offered his own blissful state, I, whose fund of good merits is exhausted, stupidly begged for pride (i.e. sovereignty etc. the cause of pride), just as a penniless fellow begs unhusked grains from an emperor.

36. Oh Vidura, people like you who are devoted to the pollen dust in the lotus-like feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and whose hearts are satisfied with whatever they get by chance (or by

* Other interpretations :

(i) Like a man in sleep, I am under the influence of the divine Māyā which is difficult to overcome. Due to her influence, I mistake my body for the real Soul (*Ātmnā*) and think that I have got independent existence, even though, in reality, there is nothing which is not under the control of Brahman. Hence, under the misconception that my brother is my enemy, I am afflicted with this heart-burning.—VR.

(ii) I am influenced by Hari's binding power—Māyā, just as a person asleep (steeped in ignorance) fails to see things in correct perspective, but takes a perverted view, I mistakenly look upon brother Uttama as my enemy, and am afflicted at heart by this misconception, even though Hari is the only independent, omnipotent Lord without a second. —VJ.

(iii) From point of *ātman*, I and my brother Uttama are *jīvas* (the *taṭastha-vṛtti* of the Lord), and from physical point of view, our bodies are composed of five *bhūtas*. In spite of this, I am deluded by Māyā to look upon him as an enemy.—VC.

42. *bhinna-dṛk*—who thinks of a *puruṣārtha* other than the Lord.—JG.

his will), do not really seek for any personal objective (*puruṣārtha*), except his service.

37. When King Uttānapāda heard that his son Dhruva was coming he did not believe in it, thinking as if it were like the news of the return to life of a dead man, and thought to himself, "How could an unfortunate person like me be so lucky ?"

38. He, however, put faith in the words of the Divine Sage Nārada. He was overwhelmed with joy. Being highly pleased with the person who brought the news, he presented him a costly necklace of pearls.

39-40. He mounted a chariot decked with gold and drawn by excellent horses. Surrounded by Brāhmaṇas, elderly members of his family, ministers and kinsmen, he, being eager to see his son, immediately set out of his capital, while conches were being blown, kettle-drums sounded, Vedic hymns chanted and flutes played upon.

41. Adorned with gold ornaments, his queens, Sunīti and Suruci, accompanied by prince Uttama, went forward in palanquins to receive him.

42-43. The king saw him (Dhruva) coming, near the garden. Being overwhelmed with love, he hurriedly got down from the chariot and quickly approached him. The king, whose heart was full of anxiety for a long time (for his missing son), was heaving deep sighs, and clasped in his arms his son Dhruva who was absolved of all the bonds of sins by the touch of Lord Hari's feet.

44. Then, the king whose most cherished desire (to see Dhruva safe) was fulfilled, smelt again and again the crown of Dhruva's head, and bathed his son with his cool tears (of joy).

45. Dhruva, the foremost among the pious people, respectfully welcomed by all, bowed at his father's feet and was addressed with blessings. He paid respects to his mothers by bowing his head.

46. Suruci (Dhruva's step-mother) lifted up the child that bowed down at her feet. She clasped it to her bosom and with her throat choked with tears, she blessed, 'May you live long'.

47. Just as water automatically flows to a lower level,

all creatures bow to him with whom Lord Hari is pleased, on account of his qualities like universal friendliness and others.

48. Overwhelmed with love, both Uttama and Dhruva embraced each other. With their hair standing on the end at the touch of each other, they constantly shed tears of joy.

49. His mother Sunīti hugged her son (who was) dearer to her than her life. Feeling happy at the touch of his body, she was relieved of her mental anguish.

50. Oh warrior Vidura ! Milk flowed out from her breasts which were then constantly bathed in the tears of joy (flowing) from the eyes of the hero's mother (Sunīti).

51. People praised the queen, "luckily your son, who was missing for a long time, has returned to remove your mental affliction. He will now protect the world (lit. the globe of the earth).

52. You have really propitiated the Lord who removes the afflictions of his suppliants, and by constantly meditating on whom, heroes (wise men) have conquered ,death which is very difficult to overcome".

53. While people were thus caressing Dhruva, the king placed Dhruva along with his brother, on a female elephant, and joyously entered his capital, amidst their cheers (lit. praise).

Description of the decorations in the city

54. There, at different places brilliant alligator-shaped festoons were hung; plaintain-trees and young areca-nut trees, with bunches of fruit were set up.

55. At every door (were placed) vessels full of water with lights burning on them, and decorated with leaves of mango trees, pieces of cloth, wreaths of flowers and strings of pearls hanging round their necks.

56. The ramparts, gates and mansions which beautified the city were decked in gold, and the tops (of the buildings) were shining like the pinnacles of celestial cars.

57. Its quadrangles, royal roads and streets were swept clean, and sprayed over with (scented) sandal-water. It was spread over with fried rice, unbroken rice *akṣatas*, flowers, fruits and other articles of worship.

58-59. Wherever Dhruva was seen on the road, the ladies of the city, out of affection, gave him auspicious benedictions. They showered on him white mustard, unbroken rice, curds, water, blades of *durvā* grass, flowers and fruits. While listening to their sweet strains, he entered his father's palace.

60. Fondly caressed by his father, Dhruva lived in the best of mansions built of most precious stones, like a god in the celestial region.

61.* There that palace was furnished with beds white and soft like the foam of milk, on ivory bed-steads chased with gold. The seats were highly precious and the furniture was made of gold.

62. There, on the walls of crystals and very costly emeralds, were shining jewel-lamps held by statuettes of beautiful damsels made of precious stones.

63. The gardens were beautiful with various species of celestial trees on which couples of birds were warbling and the swarms of intoxicated black-bees were humming sweetly.

64. There, the tanks in the garden had steps of cat's-eye (*Vaidūrya*). They contained white and blue lotuses and lilies, and were resorted to by swarms of swans, ducks, ruddy geese and cranes.

65. The royal sage Uttānapāda was highly wonder-struck at seeing his son's most wonderful prowess, of which he heard (only the reports).

66. Seeing that Dhruva had come of age, and was acceptable to his cabinet of ministers, and was loved by the subject the king coronated him as the Lord of the earth.

67. Realizing that he had grown old, the King, contemplating over the nature of the Soul, became unattached to worldly pleasures, and left for the forest.

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* This verse and the following three verses are repeated. Cf. Supra 3.33. 16-19—the description of Kardama's mansion.

CHAPTER TEN

(*Dhruva invades Alakā*)

Maitreya said :

1. Dhruva married Bhrami, the daughter of Prajāpati Śiśumāra. They had two sons, Kalpa and Vatsara.

2. And by his second wife Ilā, the daughter of Vāyu, the mighty Dhruva begot a son by name Utkala who was covetable to women like a jewel.[43]

3. But Uttama, who was yet unmarried, was killed in a hunting expedition, in the Himālayas, by a more powerful Yakṣa. His mother, Suruci, also followed his course.

4. Having heard of his brother's death, Dhruva was filled with wrath, revenge and sorrow. Mounting his victorious chariot, he marched against the abode of Yakṣas, the city of Alakā.

5. Proceeding to the northern direction, he saw, in a valley of the Himālayas, the city, Alakā, crowded with Yakṣas, and frequented by the followers of Rudra (Such as goblins, spirits).

6. The stout-armed Dhruva blew his conch, resounding the sky and all the quarters. Oh Vidura, thereby the demi-goddesses (women of the *Yakṣa* tribe) became greatly terrified and looked bewildered.

7. Incensed at the blast of the conch, the mighty and great warriors among the *Yakṣas* sallied forth from the city, and with uplifted weapons, fell upon him.

8. While the *Yakṣas* were dashing towards him the great warrior[44] with a formidable bow, simultaneously hit each one of them with three arrows.

9. With those arrows planted on their foreheads, all of

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43. *yoṣid-ratnam*—(he got) a daughter who was like a jewel among women—ŚR. VJ. accepts the v.l. *yogeśvaram*—(the son Utkala) who was the master of *Yoga* and possessed supernatural powers (*siddhis* like *aṇimā*).

44. *mahāratha*—An expert who, riding his chariot, can engage ten thousand archers simultaneously.

eko daśa-sahasrāṇi yodhayed yas tu dhanvinām /
astra-śastra-praviṇas' ca, vijñeyaḥ sa mahārathaḥ //

them felt definitely vanquished, and verily appreciated that heroic deed.

10. Being enraged like serpents trodden under feet, the *Yakṣas* also, desiring to do the double of what he did, simultaneously shot at him double the number of arrows (six each).

11-12. Then fired with anger, and desirous of retaliation those one lakh and thirty-thousand *Yakṣas* showered on him, his chariot and charioteer iron bars, swords, darts, spears, axes, lances, double-edged swords, *bhuśuṇḍi* missile and arrows with variegated feathers.

13. At that time, being covered with the heavy volley of weapons, Dhruva, the son of Uttānapāda, could not be seen, just as a hill is hidden by a thick shower of rain.

14. Immediately arose the cry 'Alas ! Alas' from the Siddhas who were witnessing the fight from the sky. 'This Sun of Manu's race, drowned in the ocean of *Yakṣa*-army, is killed'.

15. While Yakṣas and Rākṣasas (Yātudhānas)[45] were shouting and proclaiming their victory, the chariot of Dhruva came into view, like the Sun from behind the mist.

16. Twanging his divine bow, he struck terror in his enemies. He shattered to pieces their volley of missiles, like strong wind dispersing the army of clouds.

17. Sharp arrows discharged from his bow, pierced through the armours of the Rākṣasas into their bodies, just as thunderbolts (*vajras*) into the mountains.

18-19. When they were mowed down with Dhruva's arrows of *bhalla* type, the battlefield was covered with their heads adorned with beautiful ear-rings; with their thighs resembling golden palms; with arms beautiful with bracelets; with precious necklaces, armlets, crowns and costly turbans, and it appeared attractive to warriors

20. Most of the survivers of the Rākṣasa army who escaped death, got the limbs of their bodies cut off with the arrows of Dhruva, the foremost among the Kṣatriyas, and they

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45. The Bh. P. mixes up Yakṣas and Rākṣasas, as Alakā was inhabited by all kinds of demigods and their army was composed of these.

fled away from the field of battle, like the elephant-leaders discomfited in their fight with a lion (king of beasts).

21. At that time, Dhruva, the best among Manu's race, did not see anyone with a weapon in hand, on the great battle-field. Though he desired to see the city of the enemies, he did not enter it. 'A man cannot know the intentions of those expert in black magic'.

22. Telling this to his charioteer, Dhruva of wonderful chariot, apprehended an attack from the enemies and remained alert. He heard a noise like the roaring of the sea, and saw on all sides dust raised by a strong wind.

23. In a moment, the sky was overcast on all sides by a host of clouds accompanied with flashes of lightening and terrible thunders rattling, in all directions

24. They (the clouds) showered blood, phlegm, puss, excreta, fat and urine. Headless bodies fell down from heaven before him, Oh sinless (Vidura)!

25. Then a mountain appeared in the sky; and from all directions were showered maces, iron clubs, swords, pestles along with a volley of stones.

26. Serpents with thunderous hissing and emitting fire from eyes with rage, rushed at him. Intoxicated elephants, lions and tigers attacked him in multitudes.

27. Terrific like the ocean at the time of deluge, at the end of a Kalpa, a loudly roaring terrible sea, engulfing the earth on all sides with waves, approached him.

28. By means of their special power of black magic, the Asuras (Yakṣas)of cruel disposition, created many kinds of such phenomena which strike terror into unthinking men.

29. Hearing that insuperable type of black magic had been employed against Dhruva by the Asuras, sages assembled there praying for his welfare.

Sages said:

30. Oh Dhruva, son of Uttānapāda ! May the glorious Viṣṇu (wielder of the *Śārṅga* bow), your God who removes afflictions of the suppliants, destroy your enemies—the Lord by

uttering or hearing whose name, people easily overcome death which is so very difficult to conquer.[46]

CHAPTER ELEVEN

(Svāyambhuva Manu Dissuades Dhruva from Fighting)

Maitreya said:

1. Hearing this speech of the sages, Dhruva sipped some water as *ācamana*, and set to his bow the missile created by Nārāyaṇa.

2. Oh Vidura, just as afflictions disappear at the dawn of the (highest) knowledge, the manifestations of the black magic created by Guhyakas, immediately vanished, while the missile was being set on the bow.

3. Even while he was fixing on his bow the missile devised by the sage Nārāyaṇa, shafts with gold-plated heads and feathers resembling the wings of swans, shot forth from it, and penetrated the enemy's forces like peacocks entering a forest, with a terrible cry.

4. Assailed on every side, in the battle, by those sharp-pointed arrows, the Yakṣas (*Puṇyajanas*) got enraged. With their weapons raised, they rushed towards him on all sides, just as cobras with their hoods raised, would attack Garuḍa.

5. Even as they were attacking him in the battle, he cut down their arms, thighs, necks and stomachs, and sent them to that highest region, to which sages with lifelong celibacy attain, penetrating their way through the sphere of the Sun.

6. His grandfather Manu saw that the innocent Yakṣas were being slaughtered in great numbers by Dhruva, of a wonderful chariot. Out of compassion, he, accompanied by

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46. VC. and VD. add : What of dispelling the Māyā of Yakṣas. Hereby, they (sages) suggested him to use the missile *Nārāyaṇāstra*.

sages, approached Dhruva, the son of Uttānapāda and spoke thus:

Manu said:

7. Oh child, enough of this sinful rage which is a gateway to Tama (hell)—rage, (blinded) with which you have killed these innocent Yakṣas.

8. Oh child! This act of slaughtering innocent demigods (Yakṣas) commenced by you, is censured by the good. It is not becoming to our race.

9. Being enraged at the murder of your brother, whom you dearly loved, a great number (of Yakṣas) have been killed by you, for the crime of one (Yakṣa), on your suspicion of their involvement in it.

10. To massacre creatures like beasts, mistaking the gross body for the Soul (*ātman*)—this is not the way of the righteous who are devoted to Hari (the Lord of sense-organs).

11. Having propitiated Hari who dwells within all creatures[47], and who is difficult to be pleased, and looking upon all living beings as (a part of) your own self,[48] you have secured for yourself the highest realm belonging to Lord Viṣṇu.

12. You are constantly remembered by Hari, and are highly respected by his devotees. How is it that you, who should instruct others by your (exemplary) righteous conduct, have committed this censurable act?

13. It is by patience, compassion and friendliness[49] and the attitude of equality[50] to all beings that the glorious Lord, who is the Soul (*ātman*) of all, becomes propitious.

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47. Or : who is the abode of all creatures.

48. *Sarva-bhūtātma-bhāvena* : (i) Looking upon Hari as the indwelling Soul of all creatures. — VR.

(ii) Hari as *antaryāmin* of all creatures abides in all beings.—VJ.

(iii) Identifying yourself with all creatures. — VC.

(iv) Realizing that all creatures, mobile and immobile are your own Self. — GD.

49. GD. thinks that the qualities are to be shown to the superiors, the inferiors and equals respectively. Thus patience to elders etc.

50. *samatvena* — (i) To regard that all beings are essentially equal, as the Lord dwells within each of them. — VR.

(ii) To show enmity to enemies and friendliness to friends is equality. — VJ.

14. When the Lord is thoroughly pleased, a man becomes free from all the *guṇas* of *Prakṛti*. Liberated from the stage of *Jīvahood* (i.e. his subtle *Liṅga Śarīra*), he attains to the blissful Brahman.[51]

15. The male and the female are the products of the five gross elements developed in the forms of bodies. It is by their cohabitation that the creation of men and women takes place here in this world.

16. Oh king, it is due to the intermingling of *guṇas* caused by the *Māyā* (power) of the Supreme Lord that the creation, preservation and destruction of the world, take place.

17. The Supreme Man who is devoid of all attributes (like *sattva*, *rajas* etc.) is merely an apparent cause—therein that the universe consisting of manifested and unmanifested things, is in a state of flux like iron moved (by the presence of a magnet).

18.* The Supreme Lord whose power and energy is distributed by the disturbance in the equilibrium of *guṇas* caused by his potency called Time, verily creates (the universe) without being its agent, and destroys it himself not being the destroyer. Inscrutable, indeed, is the working of the Almighty.

51. *nirvāṇa* (i) Characterised by the highest bliss. — VR.
(ii) (Brahman) which is free from body or full of bliss — VJ. VJ. strongly objects to the concept of merger with Brahman as Liberation (*mukti*) will be *śūnya*.
(iii) the highest (beyond *atiśayas*)—SD.
(iv) Beyond *saṁsāra* — GD.

* *The first half*:

(i) The Lord's power is differently distributed In different species of beings such as a man, a god etc., and according to the various degrees of happiness or unhappiness to be experienced according to their *Karmas*. His potency is so divided due to His power called Time, which causes commotion among the *guṇas*. — VR.

(ii) OR: For the sake of creating disturbance in the balance of *guṇas* for the creation etc. of the universe, he divides his power, i.e. He assumes the form of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra. — VR.

(iii) VJ. accepts the v.l. *yogaśaktyā* for *kāla-śaktyā*.

It is by his power of Yoga that the Lord exhibits his power, and carries out the function of creation etc. through his three *guṇas*. Due to his effortlessness in creation he is regarded as non-creator. Though he

19* He is a creator, as he makes men beget men. As he destroys the destroyer (robbers etc.) by means of death (through kings and others), he is called the destroyer—Time. But the Almighty Himself is endless (immortal), beginningless, unchangeable and subject to no dimunition.

20.** The Supreme Lord has nobody as his own or none as his enemy; (for) he enters all beings equally as (i.e. in the form of their) death. Not being their masters (due to their *Karmas*), all creatures follow[52] him in his course, just as particles of dust follow the blast of wind.

21. The All-pervading Lord cuts short or prolongs the life of a creature according to its destiny (previous *karma*), while he himself, being above these changes, abides in his natural state.

22. Oh King (Dhruva)! Some call him Karma; others,

destroys the universe, he has no enmity against anyone. Hence he is not regarded as destroyer. — VJ.

The Lord is the cause of the creation etc. of the universe, but his workings defy our comprehension. The creation etc. of the world is due to the power of Time which creates commotion in *guṇas* . — SD.

* Though he himself is endless (immortal), he brings about the end (of the world) as Time. Though he is without a beginning and imperishable, changeless, he brings about the beginning (of all). He is the creator by making men beget men and destroys the destroyers (robbers etc.) through death.

(ii) VR. points out that the Almighty whose form is Time, does not directly create or destroy but does so through the father or death.

** (1) The Lord who is untouched by *saṁsāra* (or whose body is death), enters the bodies of all creatures as *antaryāmin* for controlling them according to their *karmas*. Nobody is his friend or enemy. (All are equal to him). All creatures, not being their masters (but subject to their previous *karmas*) follow the Lord who runs (i.e. controls them according to their *karmas*) just as particles of dust helplessly follow the wind. (The dust particles may fall at any place or pit, the wind is impartial to all the particles) — VR.

(2) Though God enters all beings as Death, creatures get different fruits according to their *karmas* despite God's equality, just as the wind treats all particles of dust equally, though some of them fall in darkness, light, water or fire. — VC.

52. *anudhāvanti*—(i) do the actions — SD.
(ii) take births — GD.

Nature; some, Time-spirit; others, Destiny; while others, the *Kāma* (desire) of men.

23. Verily nobody knows the design (purpose) of the Unmanifest Immeasurable Lord who is the source of innumerable potencies (like *Mahat* etc.). Oh child who can then know the Lord Who is one's own origin?

24. Oh dear son! These Yakṣas (the servants and followers of Kubera) are definitely not the slayers of your brother. For, oh child, it is the Destiny (*daiva*) alone, which brings about the birth or death of men.

25. It is he only who creates the universe. Nobody else but he alone protects and destroys it. In spite of this, he is not affected by *guṇas* (attributes) and *karmas*, as he is free from *ahaṁkāra* (ego).

26. This Soul of created beings, their Lord and creator gets united with his Māyā power and creates, preserves and eats up (i.e. withdraws within him) the created beings.

27. Dear child! Completely submitting all your Self, seek the shelter of the Deity who is the final resort of the world, and who is the death itself (to the unrighteous, non-devotees)—Deity to whom creators of the universe bear offerings, just as bulls controlled by a string passed through their nostrils, carry the loads (of their) masters.

28. Cut to the quick by the (harsh) words of your step-mother, you, as a child of five, went to the forest leaving back your mother. By your penance, you propitiated Lord Viṣṇu who is beyond the ken of senses, and secured (for you) a position at the head of the universe.

29. Oh dear child, with your mind (lit. sight) turned inward (on your self),[53] seek the Supreme Lord who dwells in the heart that is free from enmity[54];—the Lord who is beyond attributes (*guṇas*); one (without a second), imperishable, eternally liberated and in whom this phenomenal world of

53. *ātmadṛk* — Or one who looks upon all as himself.
(ii) With your mind concentrated on the Supreme Self.

54. *mukta-vigrahe* — Adj. qualifying *ātmani*,
(i) the Soul which is indivisible (without parts).
(ii) VJ. reads: *vimukta-vigrahair vyapāśritam* : Who is resorted to by Yogis who have become free from physical bodies.

differences, though unreal, appears to exist[55].

30. (While seeking the Lord), You practise intense devotion to the Almighty Lord who abides in all as *antaryāmin*; who is infinite, pure and absolute bliss, and is possessed of all powers. Then you will gradually cut asunder the knot of *avidyā* (nescience) which has grown very strong by (brooding over the notions that this is) 'I' and 'Mine'.

31. Oh King, by your deep and extensive study of the *śāstras*, control your anger which is a formidable hindrance to attaining to the final beatitude, just as you would control a disease with a medicine. May God bless you!

32. A wise man who wishes to attain the state of fearlessness for himself, should not allow himself to be overpowered by that passion (anger). For people get afraid of a person who is overwhelmed with anger.

33. Inasmuch as you, being enraged, have killed Yakṣas thinking that they were the slayers of your brother, you have committed a grave offence against Kubera, the brother (i.e. friend) of god Śiva (the Lord of the mountains).

34. Oh child, while the wrath of the exalted Souls (like Kubera) does not vanquish our race, you try immediately to propitiate him by paying him obeisance, and offering humble apologies.

35. Having thus admonished his grandson Dhruva, who bowed down to him, Svāyambhuva Manu returned to his city along with the sages.

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55. In the *jīva*, the worldly difference of being a god or a man is not part of his essence, but it is seen on account of meritorious or sinful *karmas*. It is not that way *mithyā*. This difference is unreal (*asat*), as it is always changing—VR..

CHAPTER TWELVE

(Kubera's Boon and Dhruva's Attainment of Viṣṇu's Realm)

Maitreya said:

1. Learning that Dhruva's anger had been appeased and that he had desisted from slaughter, the divine Lord of Wealth (Kubera) who was being eulogised by Cāraṇas, Yakṣas and Kinnaras, arrived there, and spoke to him (Dhruva) who folded his hands (to pay respects to Kubera).

Kubera (the donor of riches) said:

2. Oh sinless Kṣatriya Prince ! I am extremely pleased with you, as at the behest of your grand-father, you have given up the feeling of enmity which is very difficult to renounce.

3. (The fact of the matter is that) neither you have killed the Yakṣas nor did they slay your brother. It is none but *Kāla* (the power of God called Time), which is responsible for the creation and destruction of created beings.

4. Just as a notion in the state of dreaming is false and meaningless, so is the notion of difference as 'I' and 'You' which arises in man due to his ignorance, and on account of continuous thinking of the physical body as the Soul. Bondage of *saṁsāra* and miseries are due to this notion.

5. Oh Dhruva! Please return now. God bless you. For the sake of Liberation from *Saṁsāra*, adore Lord Adhokṣaja (Viṣṇu) who manifests himself in the bodies of all creatures, and consider that he is the *antaryāmin* (indwelling Soul) abiding in all beings[56].

6. For terminating *Saṁsāra* (the cycle of births and deaths), please worship him whose feet are worth resorting, and who destroys *saṁsāra*, and who, though associated with his own *māyā-śakti* constituted of the three *Guṇas* (attributes—*Sattva, Rajas and Tamas*), is yet aloof from it.

7. Oh son of Uttānapāda, we have learnt that you are very close to Viṣṇu's (God with a lotus in His navel) feet. Oh King Dhruva, as you deserve to receive a boon, ask of me freely and without any hesitation, any boon at will, cherished by you in your heart.

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56. Or: considering all beings as your own self.

Maitreya said:

8. The great devotee of the Lord, that highly intelligent Dhruva, who was thus induced by Kubera (the king of Kings) to ask for a boon (from him), sought to be blest with the constant remembrance of Hari, whereby one effortlessly goes beyond the darkness (of ignorance or *saṁsāra*) which is very difficult to cross.

9. With a glad heart, Kubera (the son of Iḍaviḍā), having conferred that boon (on Dhruva), immediately disappeared while Dhruva was gazing. He also repaired to his capital.

10. Thereafter, by performing sacrifices with liberal donations and sacrificial fees, he worshipped the Lord of Sacrifices who is both the donor of the fruit of religious *karmas*, and is himself the reward of the religious duties (sacrifices). He performed them with proper materials as per ritualistic technique and with due offerings to Gods.

11. Bearing an intense flow of devotion to Acyuta (Viṣṇu) who abides in all as their Soul, yet is distinct from them, he visualised the All-pervading Lord as dwelling within himself and in all other beings.

12. The subjects considered him as their father (protector)—him, who was of such noble character, friendly to Brāhmaṇas, compassionate to the afflicted, and the protector of the bounds of religion.

13. Exhausting the fund of his meritorious deeds by enjoyments of pleasures, and the balance of inauspicious deeds by performing sacrifices and other religious acts, he governed the sphere of the earth for thirtysix thousand years.

14-15. In this way, the great-Souled king of perfectly controlled senses, passed a long time in performing a number of sacrifices which result in the attainment of the Trinity—of *Dharma*, *Artha* and *Kāma*. He then regarded this universe as being illusory—constructed by Māyā on the basis of the Soul, like the dream city of Gandharvas created by *Avidyā* (Māyā or Nescience), and abdicated the throne in favour of his son.

16. Comprehending that his own body, wife, children, friends, army, rich treasury, harem, beautiful places of sport and recreations and the whole sphere of the earth engirdled by

the ocean, are subject to destruction and hence transitory, he proceeded to Viśālā (*Badarikāśrama*).

17. Having performed ablutions in the sacred waters thereof, he purified his mind (by observing *yama* and *niyama*, the code of Yogic discipline). Having steadied himself firmly in a *yogic* posture, and controlled his breath (through *prāṇāyāma*), and restraining his senses by his mind, he concentrated his mind on the gross (Cosmic) form of the Lord, viz. the *Virāṭ-rūpa*. In course of meditation, the consciousness of the distinction between the meditator and the object of meditation, was lost. Being absorbed in meditation, he forgot the thought of that gross (Cosmic) form also.

18. He cherished constant devotion to the venerable Lord Hari. He was now and then overwhelmed with tears of joy. His heart melted (with emotions for the Lord), and his hair stood on their ends all over the body. He detached himself from his gross body, and did not remember that he was so-and-so (Dhruva).

19. Dhruva noticed an excellent heavenly car descending from the heavens, illumining the ten directions like the rising full moon.

20. Later on, in that heavenly car, (he saw) two prominent gods in the prime of their youth. They were four-armed of dark complexion and with eyes (beautiful) like red lotuses. They were richly attired, and were adorned with crowns, pearl necklaces, armlets and beautiful ear-rings. They stood leaning against their maces.

21. Comprehending them to be the attendants of Hari (the God of excellent renown), he stood up (to show respect). Forgetting the due procedure of worship in the hurry of that (agitated) moment, he folded his hands uttering the names of Hari, as he thought them to be the chief attendants of Viṣṇu (the slayer of the demon Madhu).

22. Sunanda and Nanda, the esteemed servants of Viṣṇu (the lotus-navelled god) approached him (Dhruva) who had concentrated his mind on Kṛṣṇa's (Viṣṇu's) feet; had folded his palms and bowed down his neck in humility.

Sunanda and Nanda said :

23. Oh King! May you be extremely blessed! Your honour, who, while yet a child of five, had pleased the Lord by your penance, listen to our speech attentively.

24. We both are the attendants of the God with the Śārṅga bow (Viṣṇu) who is the sustainer of the whole world. Both of us have arrived here for taking you to the Lord's abode.

25. You have successfully attained to the region of Viṣṇu which is extremely difficult to secure, and to which sages, (the *saptarṣis—Ursa Major*) not being able to reach, merely look up from below. Now occupy that place round which (luminous bodies like) the Moon, the Sun (and other luminaries), planets, constellations of stars and (independent) stars go, keeping it to their right.

26. Dear (Dhruva), take your abode in the realm which has never been occupied by your forefathers. That highest region of Viṣṇu is adorable to all worlds.

27. Oh long-lived one, you should now ascend this excellent aerial car, despatched to you by Viṣṇu who is the foremost among persons of meritorious renown.[57]

Maitreya said:

28. Having heard the extremely sweet (honey-dripping) words of the two prominent deputies of Lord Viṣṇu, Dhruva, the beloved devotee of Viṣṇu[58], took his bath, performed his daily auspicious duties, paid his obeisance to sages and received their blessings.

29. Having circumambulated that excellent heavenly car, he worshipped it. He bowed down to both the attendants of Viṣṇu. Assuming a form brilliant like gold, he desired to get into the car.

30. At that time, when the son of Uttānapāda (Dhruva) saw that the god of Death had come, he placed his foot on the head of that god (of Death)[59] and mounted that wonderful aerial mansion.

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57. *uttama-śloka*.

58. *Urukrama* : Viṣṇu, so called because in the Vāmana incarnation he took very long strides to occupy the three worlds from Bali.

59. ŚR. narrates the episode thus: When Dhruva was about to enter that heavenly car, the God of Death arrived there, bowed to him and

31. At the very moment, drums and musical instruments like Paṇava, etc. were sounded. Prominent Gandharvas sang his praise. Showers of flowers fell on him from above.

32. As he was about to fly to the heavenly regions, Dhruva suddenly remembered his mother Sunīti, (saying to himself), 'How am I to proceed to the inaccessible celestial region, leaving my poor mother behind?'

33. Having understood this wish of Dhruva, the two excellent gods showed to him the brilliant queen-mother Sunīti—going ahead of him, in an aerial car.

34. At every stage on way, Dhruva was being showered with flowers and praised by gods seated in their heavenly cars; and he went past planets, one after another.

35. Then he (Dhruva) who was blest with an eternal position, went by the *devayāna* path (or by the celestial car sent to him by the Lord), beyond the three worlds and the astral positions of the seven sages (*Ursa Major*), and reached the abode of Viṣṇu which lies beyond them.

36. It (Viṣṇu's abode) shines brilliant by its own splendour. It illuminates these three worlds (the earth, the heaven etc.) by its light. The people who are not compassionate unto living beings never attain to this realm. Only those who always perform auspicious deeds, reach there.

37. Those who are of tranquil mind, who look upon all beings as equals, whose minds are cleansed of all sins and impurities (like *rajas* and *tamas*), who are pleasing to all beings, who look upon Acyuta (Viṣṇu) as their dear relative—those easily reach the abode of Viṣṇu.

38. In this way, Dhruva, the son of Uttānapāda who was solely devoted to Kṛṣṇa (Viṣṇu), became as if a refulgent crest-jewel of the three worlds.

39. Oh Vidura (descendant of Kuru)! Riveted to this (Dhruva's) post, the whole group of heavenly luminaries revolve round it ceaselessly, just as (pairs of) bullocks tied to a post in the middle of the threshing ground, go round with great speed (for threshing out the corn by trampling).

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requested him to accept him. Dhruva welcomed him, requested him to sit down for a moment; and remembering Lord Viṣṇu placed his foot on the head of that God (Death) and accended into the heavenly car.

40. Having seen the great glory of Dhruva, the venerable sage Nārada, playing on his lute, sang the (following) verses at the sacrificial session of Pracetas:

Nārada said:

41. Despite their knowledge of the means, Brāhmaṇa sages, the expounders of Vedas, are not able to reach the attainment secured by the dint of his austere penance, by Dhruva, the son of Sunīti who looked upon her husband as god. How can then, kings attain to it?

42. As a child of five, he went to the forest with his heart afflicted by being wounded with the arrow-like words of his stepmother. Abiding by my advice, he conquered i.e. won the favour of the unconquerable Lord who is overpowered only by the excellent qualities of his devotees.

43. Can an ordinary Kṣatriya on the earth even imagine to reach after many years to the exalted position occupied by Dhruva who, as a child of five or six years, secured it by propitiating Lord Viṣṇu within a few days?

Maitreya continued:

44. I have narrated to you everything that you asked me here about the life-story of Dhruva of excellent fame—the life story which is held in high regard by the righteous.

45. If heard and recited, it (Dhruva's life story) leads to wealth, glory and longevity; it is meritorious and brings in great auspiciousness; it helps to attain to the celestial region and to reach even the eternal abode; it leads to godhood; it is extremely praiseworthy, and cleanses all sins.

46. By constantly listening with faith and devotion the lifestory of Dhruva who was dear to Lord Acyuta (Viṣṇu), devotion unto the Lord will be engendered, which will lead to the destruction of all miseries.

47. Here this story is a sacred fountain of greatness for those who seek it. When it is heard, virtues like good-naturedness generate in the listeners. Those who desire bravery and splendour get it developed (in them by listening to it). It bestows respectability on the noble-minded (listeners who aspire after it).

48. One should recite both in the morning and in the evening, the glorious life, with a concentrated attention, of Dhruva of sacred glory, in the assembly of the Brāhmaṇas.

49-50. Or one who resorts to the sacred feet of Hari, should narrate to the faithful (audience, the life of Dhruva) on the full-moon day or the new moon day, the twelfth day of a fortnight or when the moon passes by the constellation of stars called Śravaṇa or on *dina-kṣaya* or on (the astronomically inauspicious *yoga* called) the Vyatipāta, or on the Saṅkramaṇa day (when the Sun crosses the sign of the zodiac) or on Sundays. He should cherish no desire and be self-contented; thereby he attains Liberation.

51. Gods bestow favours on the merciful man who is helpful to the afflicted and who imparts this knowledge (which is like) nectar in the pathway to God, to persons who are ignorant of the Truth.

52. Oh Vidura (the foremost descendant of Kuru), I have narrated to you this biography of Dhruva who is well-known for pious deeds, and who, as a child, abandoned his toys and mother's house, and resorted to Viṣṇu.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN*

(Dhruva's descendants : King Aṅga's Abdication)

Sūta said:

1. After listening to (the account of) Dhruva's ascension to the Vaikuṇṭha region as described by Maitreya, Vidura

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* Chs. 13-15 give the following genealogy of Dhruva —

Bhrami = Dhruva = Ilā

- Kalpa
- Vatsara (Svarvithi)
  - Puṣpārṇa (and others, 6 sons in all)
    - Vyuṣṭa (and others, 6 sons in all)
- Utkala

whose devotion to Lord Viṣṇu (Adhokṣaja) was intensified, proceeded again to make further queries.

Vidura said:

2. Oh strict observer of religious vows (Maitreya)! Who were those Pracetasas? Whose children were they? To whose familyline were they known to belong ? Where did they have the sacrificial session ?

3. I regard Nārada as a great devotee of the Lord, and as one who has directly realized the Almighty. It is he who has expounded (in the Pañcarātra Āgama) the *Kriyā-Yoga* (Yoga of practical devotion), in the form of the detailed procedure of worshipping Hari.

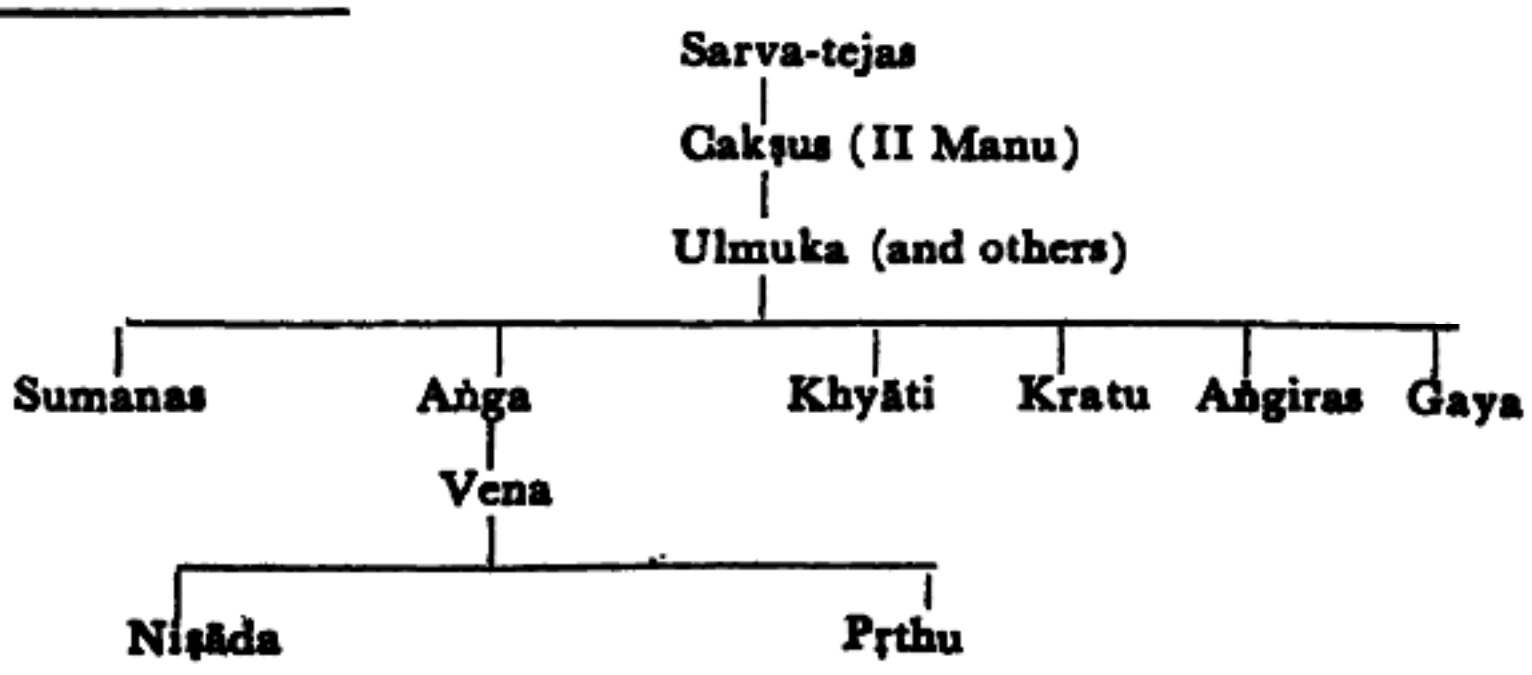
4. They say that while the Lord, the presiding deity of sacrifices, was being worshipped (by performing sacrifice) by men (Pracetasas) who were devoted to their righteous duties, Nārada, who was full of devotion, extolled him.

5. Oh Brahman, you should please narrate to me in details, all the stories of the Lord which have been related there, in that sacrifice by the divine sage (Nārada), as I long to hear them.

Maitreya said :

6. When the father (Dhruva) retired to forest, Dhruva's (eldest) son Utkala did not wish to ascend the imperial throne and to enjoy the imperial glory.

7. From his very birth, he was of tranquil mind, unattached and of impartial outlook. He saw his Soul as pervading the world and the world abiding in his Soul.



8-9. By the fire of the uninterrupted practice of *Yoga*, Utkala had burnt down all the impurities of the past actions in his mind. He realized that the individual Self is the same as the tranquil Brahman in whom all differences dissolve and disappear, and who is the embodiment of the joy of pure knowledge, absolute bliss, existing everywhere. Knowing thus his own real Self, he ceased to perceive anything different from it.

10. To ignorant persons on the road, he (outwardly) appeared to be a stupid, blind, deaf, mad or a dumb man, though (in reality) he was mentally not like any of these. He was like a fire that had ceased to send out flames.

11. Considering him to be a dull idiot, the elders of the family along with the ministers, coronated the younger brother Vatsara, the son of Bhrami, as the ruler of the earth.

12. Svarvīthi, the beloved wife of Vatsara, gave birth to six sons, viz., Puspārṇa. Tigma-ketu, Iṣa, Ūrja, Vasu and Jaya.

13. Puṣpārṇa had two wives—Prabhā (Day-light) and Doṣā (Night). Prātar (morning), Madhyandina (Mid-day) and Sāyam (Evening) were the sons of Prabhā (Day-light).

14. Pradoṣa (night-fall or the first part of night), Niśītha (Midnight) and Vyuṣṭa (Dawn or the late part of the night) were the three sons of Doṣā (Night). Vyuṣṭa begot from (his wife) Puṣkariṇī a son called Sarva-tejas.

15. He got from his wife Ākūti a son, Cakṣus the Manu (after Svāyambhuva Manu). Manu's queen Naḍvalā gave birth to (twelve) sinless sons.

16. (They were) Puru, Kutsa, Trita, Dyumna, Satyavat, Ṛta, Vrata, Agniṣṭoma, Atirātra, Pradyumna, Śibi and Ulmuka.

17. Ulmuka begot through his wife Puṣkaraṇī six excellent sons by name Aṅga, Sumanas, Khyāti, Kratu, Aṅgiras and Gaya.

18. Sunīthā, the wife of Aṅga, gave birth to the strong-willed (but wicked) Vena. Disgusted with his (Vena's) wickedness, the royal sage left his capital (and retired to the forest).

19. Oh child (Vidura)! The sage whose words were (destructive) like thunderbolt, got enraged and pronounced

a curse on him. (As a result of the curse he fell dead). They churned again the right hand of his dead body.

20. When there was no King, in that period, the subjects in the world, were troubled by robbers. Then Pṛthu, the first Lord of the earth (so called as he was the first founder of cities, habitations etc.) was born embodying in him an *aṁśa* or portion of Nārāyaṇa.

Vidura said :

21. How is it that the high-souled, pious king, who was a treasure-house of virtues and so friendly to Brāhmaṇas got such wicked progeny, that he had to leave his capital in sadness and grief.

22. Or for what offence did the sages, who were well-versed in Dharma-Śāstra, directed their curse against King Vena, who had vowed to punish the evil-doers.

23. As the king, in the capacity of the protector of his subjects, possesses the energy and the splendour of (Indra and other) world-protectors, in his own superior glory, he should not be disrespected by the subjects, even though he be at fault.

24. Oh Brahman, as you are the foremost among the knowers of *para* and *avara*[60], please narrate to me, a devout devotee, the deeds of the son of Sunīthā.

Maitreya said :

25. The royal sage Aṅga performed a great Horse-Sacrifice (Aśvamedha). But in that sacrifice, the deities though invoked by the priests well-versed in the Vedas, did not turn up (to receive their share of the sacrificial offerings).

26. Then the sacrificial priests who were wonder-struck told the sacrificer (King Aṅga), "the deities do not accept the sacrificial oblations though poured into the fire."

27. "Oh King, the materials for oblations are unpolluted and pure and have been devoutly procured by you. The Vedic incantations are not inefficacious, since they are chanted and used by persons of steadfast vows.

60. *para* and *avara* : Variously interpreted as 'past and future', Parmātaman and products of Prakṛti, etc.

28. We do not know if the slightest disregard is shown to gods here (in this performance of sacrifice) as a result of which gods who witness the performance of this sacrificial act, do not partake of their share of oblations".

Maitreya said :

29. Hearing the words of Brāhmaṇas, the host, the performer of the sacrifices, Aṅga became deeply grieved. With the permission of the members of the assembly, he broke his silence in order to ask them the reason of the non-acceptance of oblations.

30. "Oh Members of the sacrificial assembly ! Here (in this sacrifice) deities even though invoked, do not attend. Nor do they accept their cups of Soma. Be pleased to tell me what censurable act has been committed by me."

The Leaders of the Assembly spoke :

31. Oh King, there is not the slightest sin committed by you so far in this life. There is however one sin of your previous life on account of which you are thus issueless.

32* Oh King, the Lord, the enjoyer of sacrifices, when worshipped, will vouchsafe a son to you who are so desirous to have one. Try that way to have good progeny. May God bless you.

33. If Lord Hari, the presiding god of the sacrifices himself, is directly invoked by you for a child, all sacrificial deities (the residents of heaven) will automatically accept their respective share of oblations.

34. Hari confers upon men (his devotees) whatever desires are cherished (and sought) by them. The attainment of the desired objects, however, depends upon the manner (and devoutness) of the worship (of the Lord)."

35. Thus resolved, the Brāhmaṇas offered *puroḍāśa*[61] to Viṣṇu in the form of *Śipiviṣṭa*[62], for securing progeny to that king.

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* With a view to ensuring that deities should be pleased to accept oblations from you, you should try to secure a child to you. — ŚR.

61. *Puroḍāśa* — a sacrificial oblation made of ground rice and offered in a *kapāla* or vessel. ASD. 341.

62. *Śipiviṣṭa* (i) 'One who has entered the sacrificial animal (the beast to be sacrificed) in the form of Sacrifice'. ŚR. quotes a Śruti

36. From that sacrifice arose a person adorned with gold necklace and clad in immaculate garments, bringing with him in a gold vessel ready made *pāyasa* (rice boiled in milk).

37. With the assent of the Brāhmaṇas the generous-minded King accepted the boiled rice in the hollow of his folded palms, smelt it and gave it to the queen joyfully.

38. Having eaten that food which had the efficacy of creating a male child, the issueless queen varily became pregnant from her husband, and in due course of time gave birth to a son.

39. Since his childhood, the boy was attached to his maternal grandfather Mṛtyu who inherited a portion of Adharma. Hence he became unrighteous.

40. Taking up his bow and wandering as a hunter in the jungle, this wicked boy killed innocent deer. Hence people (after seeing him) would cry out "This is Vena"[63] (the tormentor).

41. This extremely ruthless, hard hearted boy used to slay violently like beasts, boys of his own age playing on the playground.

42. Seeing that his son was so wicked, and finding that he (the king) was not successful in disciplining him in spite of different kinds of punishments, the king became sorely dejected at heart.

43. (He thought) 'Most probably the householders who are issueless must have worshipped god for they are spared the unbearable agony caused by a wicked child.

44-45. Indeed what wise man will think highly of the embarrassing bondage called (his own) son if he brings evil reputation (to his father) among men and implicates him in serious unrighteousness, if he creates conflicts with all and causes unending mental torture (to his father) making his home-life full of distress.

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which means that Viṣṇu resides in the sacrificial animal as the spirit of the sacrifice. This form of Viṣṇu is invoked in the sacrifice specifically performed to get a son. (Putra-kāmeṣṭi).

(ii) Or: from whom rays are emanating—VR.

63. ŚR. derives the name from *ven* — 'to harass' or 'to make others full of anxiety.'

46. (In a way) I regard a bad child preferable to a good child as it is a cause of many sorrows. And a man gets disgusted with his home which is full of troubles.

47. The king who was thus dejected at heart, could not get any sleep. At midnight he got up and leaving Vena's mother asleep[64] and unnoticed by other men, he departed from the palace abounding in prosperity.

48. When the subjects, royal priests, ministers, friends and relatives of the king learnt that the king had departed in disgust, they became overwhelmed with excessive grief. They searched for him all over the world (without success), just as Yogins on the wrong path do in search of the unmanifest Supreme Man hidden in their heart[65].

49. Being unable to trace any trail of the king and having thus failed in their attempts to do so, the subjects returned to the capital. Bowing to assembled sages, they reported with tearful eyes the disappearance of their king, oh Vidura (discendant of Puru).

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

(*The Story of Vena : Pṛthu's Birth*)

Maitreya said :

1-2. Bhṛgu and other sages who were solicitous about the well-being of the people, saw that men are reduced to brute-level at the time of anarchy. Those sages, well versed in the Vedas, invited Sunīthā, the mother of the hero (Vena), and coronated Vena as the Lord of the Earth, even though he was not approved by ministers or people.

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64. ŚR. thinks that the king disguised himself while Vena's mother was sleeping.

65. ŚR. states that the king was somewhere in the town while they were searching for him outside all over the world.

3. Having heard that Vena, the very high-handed iron ruler, had ascended the throne, robbers hid themselves immediately like rats afraid of a serpent.

4. After occupying the king's place he who became proud and self-conceited, regarded himself invested with the powers of the eight protectors of the world automatically, and contemptuously treated the great sages.

5. He, who thus became blind with pride, and haughty like an elephant uncontrolled by goads, mounted his chariot and wandered over the earth shaking heaven and earth.

6. With the sound of drums, he promulgated everywhere, "Oh Dvijas, you shall never perform worship, and shall give no donations and shall not perform sacrifices". Thus he prohibited religion everywhere.

7. The sages, seeing the ill-behaved conduct of Vena, and considering the public calamity, assembled at a sacrificial session and said.

8. "A great danger has arisen to people from both sides—from robbers and the king, like (that to ants who find themselves in the middle of) a piece of wood burning from both sides.

9. This unworthy prince was made a king on account of the fear of anarchy. But today danger has arisen even from him. How can the welfare of beings be ensured ?

10-11. Vena who is born from the womb of Sunīthā, is hereditarily wicked. Just as the nourishing of a snake with milk is dangerous even to the man who so feeds it, Vena who has been appointed as the protector of the subjects verily desires to destroy them. Let us (however) persuade him (to behave properly) so that his sin may not touch us.

12-13. Despite our full knowledge of Vena's wicked conduct and sinfulness, we made him the king. If, in spite of our gentle persuasions, that unrighteous fellow does not abide by our words of advice, let us burn him by our spiritual power, although he is already burnt by the reproach of the people". Having decided thus, the sages, concealing their anger, approached that Vena, and pacifying him with conciliatory words, spoke.

Sages said :

14. "Oh Great King ! Please note that what we propose to urge for your consideration will, Oh child, increase your longevity, prosperity, power and glory.

15. Righteous duty (*Dharma*) practised in thought, word, deed and understanding, bestows on ordinary people worlds which are free from sorrows and the eternal abode (*Mokṣa*) to those who perform it without any attachment (to its fruits).

16. Oh brave king, let not your *Dharma* (duty) of ensuring security and well being of the subjects, be neglected (and lost) by you. For when it is lost (disregarded), the king falls from his rulership.

17. Oh king, a king who protects his subjects from wicked ministers and from thieves (and other miscreants) and takes revenue (from them as prescribed in *Śāstras*), leads a happy life.

18-19. Oh illustrious King ! The Lord creator of all beings, the Soul of the universe is pleased with the king who obeys his commands, and in whose kingdom and capital city, the glorious presiding deity of the sacrifice is worshipped according to their *dharma*, by persons who follow the duties of their respective *Varṇa* (social class) and *āśrama* (stage of life).

20. What is unattainable, when the Lord of the rulers of the worlds (e.g. god Brahmā etc.) is pleased ? For all the worlds along with their protecting deities devoutly offer worship to him.

21* Oh King ! It behoves you to approve of, and be

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* VR.: The Lord controls all worlds, their presiding deities and sacrifices which lead to the attainment of godhood. He is the embodiment of hree Vedas which explain what .is and is not the righteous duty (*dharma*). The Vedas prescribe both the ways of sacrifices and of penance. It is for the sake of your Liberation or prosperity that the inhabitants of your country perform different kinds of sacrifices. You should therefore follow their example.

SD.: You should direct the inhabitants of your country to perform their respective duties—the inhabitants who according to their abilities of the *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti* type, worship the Lord who protects all the worlds, gods and sacrifices, and who is the embodiment of three Vedas which give the knowledge of sacrifice, and who is the sacrificial materials and the penance, the knowledge leading to Liberation. It is thus that you will get prosperity here and Liberation hereafter.

conciliatory to the inhabitants of your country[66] who, for your prosperity, worship, by performance of various sacrifices, the Lord who is the Controller of all worlds, gods and sacrifices—the Lord who is the embodiment of three Vedas and of all sacrificial materials, and who is the object of penance.

22. Oh brave king, if gods who are parts (*aṁśas*) of Hari, are properly worshipped and well-propitiated by performance of sacrificial sessions by the twice-born Brāhmaṇas, Kṣattriyas and Vaiśyas, they will confer whatever is desired by you. It is not, therefore, proper to disrespect them (by prohibiting sacrificial and religious performances).

Vena said :

23. Verily, all of you are foolish. You regard non-righteousness (*adharma*) as righteousness (*dharma*). What a pity ! Abandoning the husband who gives you means of subsistence, you wait upon a paramour.

24. Those fools who disregard the supreme Lord in the form of a king, do not obtain any good either here or hereafter.

25. Who is this *Yajña-puruṣa* (the presiding deity of sacrifices) for whom you cherish such (intense) devotion like characterless women who, being absolutely devoid of love for their husbands, cherish it for their gallants.

26-27. Gods like Viṣṇu (the protector of the universe), Brahmā (the creator of the world), Śiva (the destroyer of the universe), Indra, Vāyu (Wind), Yama (god of death), the Sun (-god), the rain-god, the god of Wealth (Kubera), the Moon (-god), the (presiding deity of the) Earth, the Fire (-god) and Varuṇa (the Lord of Waters)—these and other gods who are competent to confer boons or pronounce curses reside in the person of the sovereign ruler. The Monarch is thus the embodiment of all gods.

28. Therefore, Oh Brāhmaṇas ! Being free from jealousy, you worship me with your religious rites. Give me all

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66. *svadeśān* : (i) The persons whom you command — the sacrificers. VR. (ii) The Brāhmaṇas on whom donations or gifts are conferred —VJ.

your offerings (taxes etc.). What other person than me, deserves to be propitiated (honoured) for it ?

Maitreya said :

29. Even though so humbly entreated, the wretched sinner was of such a perverted mind and had gone so astray on the wrong path, that he did not accede to their supplications, for he had lost all auspiciousness.

30. Oh Vidura ! When he, priding himself as very learned, insulted these twice-born (Brāhmaṇas), and spurned their request made in the interest of the public good, the Brāhmaṇas got angry with him.

31. "Let him be slain; let this wicked fellow of terrible nature be killed. If he lives (any longer), he will soon reduce the world to ashes.

32. This shameless fellow vilifies Viṣṇu, the Supreme Deity of Sacrifices. This man of wicked conduct does not deserve the exalted seat of a monarch.

33. Or who else other than this base unlucky Vena alone, will revile Viṣṇu after attaining to such sovereignty over world through His grace."

34. With their rage flared up, the sages who thus decided to slay him, killed by their hissing (*huṃ*) sound, Vena who was already dead by his vilification of god Viṣṇu (Acyuta).

35. When the sages departed to their hermitages, Sunīthā who was full of grief, preserved the dead body of her son by means of incantations (mantras) and medicines.

36. Once upon a time, those sages, having performed ablutions in the Sarasvatī, and after offering oblations to the sacrificial fire, were sitting on the bank of the river, talking about the stories of the Lord.

37. Observing the appearance of terrible ill omens striking terror into the world, they (wishfully) said : "May no evil befall the protectionless earth from robbers".

38. While sages were thinking thus, there arose in all directions clouds of dust from the rushing of the thieves and miscreants who ran amuck plundering (wherever they went).

39. They came to know that the serious trouble to the

world was caused by those free booters who plundered the wealth of the people, and by those who tried to kill each other, as the king (Vena) was dead.

40. When anarchy prevails, the state becomes weak and the country is infested with robbers. Though they (sages) were powerful enough to control, they did not check the people as they saw the evil (involved therein).

41. "Even if a Brāhmaṇa who should view all beings equally and should be tranquil, neglects (to protect) the afflicted, his penance leaks away like water filled in a pot with a hole.

42. The race of the royal sage Aṅga should not come to an end, as it is in this family that there were many kings of unfailing prowess, yet completely dependent on Keśava (Viṣṇu)".

43. Having resolved thus, the sages churned forcibly the thigh of the deceased king. Therefrom appeared a dwarf-fish man.

44. He was black as crow, had very short limbs and small arms, protruding chin, short legs, flat nose and blood-red eyes and red hair.

45. To him who bowed to them, and meekly asked them, "What I should do", they asked him to sit down (*niṣīda*). Therefore, Oh Vidura, he became *niṣāda* (by tribe).

46. As soon as he was born, he took upon himself the heinous sins of Vena. His descendants the *naiṣādas* took refuge in mountains, jungles, etc.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

(Birth of Pṛthu and his Coronation)

Maitreya said :

1. Thereupon, a couple (a boy and a girl) was born from the arms of the sonless king, when they (the arms) were being churned by the Brāhmaṇas.

2. Having seen the birth of the couple, the sages who were well-versed in the Vedas, became highly pleased to know that it was an *aṁśa* (portion or digit) of the glorious Lord and spoke.

Sages said :

3. This (Pṛthu) is a manifestation of that *aṁśa* (portion) of Lord Viṣṇu which protects the world[67]. This (girl) is the portion and incarnation of Goddess Lakṣmī who is never disunited from the Supreme Man (Viṣṇu)*.

4. As to this male child, he will be the first and foremost among kings, the enhancer of their glory. As his fame will spread far and wide, he will be known as Pṛthu, the great king.

5. And this beautiful, resplendent lady with finely set teeth who is the ornament of ornaments and virtues, will be called Arcis and will be Pṛthu's consort.

6. It is with the object of protecting the world that this *aṁśa* (portion) of direct Hari himself, is born. And this is verily the Goddess Lakṣmī who is inseparable from him and ever (absolutely) devoted to him.

Maitreya said :

7. Brāhmaṇas eulogised him; the foremost among the Gandharvas sang (his glory); Siddhas poured down showers of (heavenly) flowers; the celestial damsels danced.

8. The heavens were reverberating with sounds of musical instruments like conchs, trumpets, timbrels and drums. There assembled all the gods, sages and *pitṛs* (manes) of all grades.

9-10. With gods and kings of gods, Brahmā, the father of all the worlds, arrived there. Observing the mark of Viṣṇu (the wielder of the mace) on (Pṛthu's) right palm, and the lotus-mark on the soles of Pṛthu's feet he concluded that he (Pṛthu) is verily the part (*kalā*) of Viṣṇu; for he on whose

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67. *Viṣṇoḥ kalā* : (i) The special *āveśa* type of *avatāra* — VR.
(ii) Who was filled with the presence of Viṣṇu.—VJ

* Here ends Ch. 14 of the Bh.P. as per VJ.'s text. Some texts omit ses 2 and 3.

palm the *cakra* (discus) mark is uncrossed by any other line, is the *aṁśa* (portion) of the Lord.

11. His coronation ceremony was commenced by Brāhmaṇas who were well-versed in Vedas (and expert in the Vedic rites and rituals of the ceremony). From all directions, people brought all the materials necessary for the coronation ceremony.

12. Rivers, seas, mountains, snakes, cattle, birds, beasts, deer, the sky, the earth and all beings brought tributes to him.

13. When the emperor, arrayed in excellent royal robes, and richly adorned with ornaments, was thus installed, along with the well-adorned queen, consort Arcis, he shone like another Fire-god.

14. Oh warrior, Kubera (the god of wealth) brought to him an excellent throne of gold; Varuṇa (the Lord of Waters), a royal umbrella radiating moon-white rays and dripping with water;

15. Vāyu (the Wind-god) presented him two *chowries* (special types of fans made of the tufts of hair on the tails of particular kinds of wild cows); Dharma, a garland, the very embodiment of glory; Indra (the King of gods), an excellent crown; Yama (the god of death and controller of the world), a sceptre to govern the world.

16. God Brahmā bestowed upon him an armour of Vedic incantations (or Vedic knowledge); the goddess of learning, an excellent necklace; Lord Hari, the Sudarśana disc, and his consort Lakṣmī, undiminishing prosperity and affluence.

17. Rudra gave him a sword engraved with ten moon-like marks, while Pārvatī, gave him a shield bearing the marks of a hundred moons; the Moon-god presented him immortal, indefatigable, undaunted horses made of nectar, while Tvaṣṭṛ gave him extremely artistic and beautiful chariot.

18. The Fire-god gave him a bow made from the horns of goats and oxen; the Sun-god supplied him with his solar-ray-like arrows. The earth presented him sandals with mystic (Yogic) powers; and the sky, an ever fresh flower garland.

19. The demigods that move through the sky bestowed on him the arts of dancing, vocal and instrumental music, and

the mystic power of vanishing. The sages gave him their never-failing efficacious blessings, and the Ocean-god, a conch born from him.

20. The oceans, mountains and rivers gave the high-souled King roads of communications by chariots. Then bards (Sūtas) minstrels (Māgadhas) and heralds (Bandins) began to sing his panygeric.

21. Knowing their intention, Pṛthu, the chivalrous son of Vena, laughed and spoke to them in a voice deep like the thunder of clouds.

Pṛthu said:

22. Oh Sūta ! Oh Māgadha ! Oh gentle *Bandin* ! What is the basis of your panygeric of me whose qualities are yet to be manifested in the world ? You should address it to me when my merits will be acknowledged by the public. Your words of praise in my case should not prove untrue.

23. Oh bards of sweet words ! Therefore, after a lapse of some time (when we perform some exploits worth singing), you may compose as many panygerics about my glory as you like. But when praise-worthy attributes of Lord Hari of excellent glory are there for glorification, good people do not eulogise ordinary (contemptible) men (like me).

24. What man with the capability of acquiring high merits will allow the bards to sing of qualities that are actually non-existent in him ? The dullard who fools himself that those (non-existent) virtues may be manifest in him (later), does not see that he becomes thereby a butt of public ridicule.

25. Really competent persons and illustrious persons abhor the praise, (even though they possess the qualities so praised, and are known for them). Truly modest and noble-minded persons shrink from the praise of their uncomplimentary show of valour.

26. Oh bard ! We are still unknown in this world for the performance of any exploit. (As we have not performed any great deed which can be extolled), how can we, like fools, allow you to sing of our glory.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

(The Eulogy of Pṛthu by Bards)

Maitreya said :

1. The bards were satisfied at heart by hearing his nectarlike words. Being urged by sages, they began to extol the king who was speaking thus.

2. We are competent to describe fully your glory as you are the Supreme God who have incarnated in this world by your Māyā (power). The intelligence of even masters of speech (like god Brahmā and others) has been perplexed in describing the exploits of you who are born from the arms of Vena.

3. We are, however, devoutly interested in the nectar-like stories of Pṛthu, of glorious renown, who is an incarnation of an *aṁśa* (part) of Hari. We are instructed by sages. We broadcast far and wide the praiseworthy deeds, according to the instructions of the sages.

4. This (king Pṛthu) is the foremost among the upholders of religion. He makes the people act according to *Dharma* (righteous path). He is the protector of the established institutions of religion and morality. He is the punisher of those who are antagonistic (to religion).

5. (Though) he is one, he bears in his person the bodies (i.e. the powers and functions) of the guardians of the world from time to time, as per needs (of the situation) for the public good, both here and hereafter.

6.* He is impartial to all beings. This mighty monarch collects taxes and tributes at proper times, and releases (the fund) at the opportune time (like famine etc.), just as the bright Sun (evaporates the waters in the summer and returns it as showers of water in the rainy season).

7. The behaviour of the king is like the goddess of the earth. The compassionate son of Vena (i.e. Pṛthu) always bears the faults of the distressed beings, though they may encroach upon him.

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* From this verse onwards the king's execution of the functions of the eight protectors of the world (*lokapālas*), is described.

8. He is veritable Hari who has assumed the body of the king. When the rain-god withholds showers of rain, he would like Indra, easily protect the subjects whose life was in danger.

9. He pleases the world with his moon-like face—the embodiment of nectar—beaming with charming smiles and brightened with affectionate looks.

10. His ways are inscrutable; his acts are secret and unsurmisable; his intentions are too deep to be comprehended; he strictly guards his wealth; he is the sole receptacle of infinite greatness and innumerable excellent attributes; like Varuṇa, the Lord of Waters, Pṛthu's true nature is unfathomable (hidden from the public view).

11. He is (like) the fire born from (the friction of) the *araṇi* (piece of Śamī wood) in the form of Vena (for he was born after churning Vena's arm). He is (even mentally) unapproachable to his enemies. His overwhelming power is irresistible by his enemies. Though he be near, he is as if at a great distance (as he is well-guarded by his security force) It is impossible to overpower him.

12. Though he sees the overt and covert activities of human beings through his intelligence service (spies), he behaves as if he is indifferent (to praise or blame). He is thus like the vital air, the Soul that witnesses, as if unconcerned, the inner and outer activities of all.

13. He is so firmly established in the path of *dharma* (royal duties) that he never punishes anyone if he does not deserve punishment even though he be the son of his personal enemy; and that he would punish his own son, if found guilty (and worth punishing).

14. His unchallenged *cakra* (sway, march of his army or the path of his chariot) extends from the *Mānasottara* mountain[68] to all regions where the Sun-god shines by his rays.

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68. *Mānasottara*. — A hill of Puṣkaradvīpa to the east of Meru. Devadhānī, the city of Indra and other cities are there; like the wheel of an oilmill, the wheel of Sūrya's chariot is said to rotate on the hill as its axis (PI.2. 686), A.B.L. Awasthi's identification of this mount with the northern portion of Mānasādri, the neighbouring hill overlooking Mānasa lake (*Studies in Skanda Purāṇa*, p. 198) is purely conjectural.

15. He will delight and bring happiness to all people by his acts. It is on account of his acts of promoting happiness (and welfare of the people) that his subjects will call him *rājan* (lit. one who pleases, i.e. the king).[69]

16. He is firm in his vows; true to his words; a friend of Brāhmaṇas (who are devoted to the studies of Vedas); a servant of aged people; the shelter of all beings; paying respect (where due) and kind to the afflicted.

17. He shows the same regard and respect to other women as he would to his mother. He treats his wife as if she were half of his own person. He is affectionate to his subjects like a father. He behaves (respectfully) like a servant, to those who are well-versed in the Vedas.

18. He is most beloved to all creatures as if he was their own Self. He enhances the delight of his friends and well-wishers. He is especially attached to the company of those who are free from worldly attachments. He wields his rod of punishment against the evil-minded (miscreants).

18A*. By dint of his great personal power, he will make the good earth produce all the plants (as one milks the cow). He will make this earth flat by the end of his bow.

19. But really he is directly the Supreme Lord himself who has incarnated by his *kalā* (portion, part)—the Supreme Lord who governs the three worlds; is the unchangeable perpetual inner controller of all beings; even the apparent multiplicity created in whom by nescience is rendered subs-tanceless (and unmeaningful) when he is realized.

20. This matchless warrior, the King of kings, is the sole protector of the sphere of the earth, from the *Udaya* mountain with a bow in hand, and seated in his triumphant chariot, he will go round the earth from right to left, just as the Sun does.

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69. Cf. *Yathā prahlādanāccandraḥ pratāpāt tapano yathā |*
Tathaiva so'bhud anvartho rājā Prakṛti-rañjanāt ||

Raghuvaṁśa. 4.12

* This verse is included here, being authenticated by VR., VJ., SD. and BP. who have commented on it. It is found in the Southern recension of the Bh. P. But ŚR., RR., VD. GS. and GD. have ignored it in their comments.

21. Kings, as well as the guardians to the quarters of the world, will certainly pay tribute to him at every place. Their queens will regard this first king as Lord Viṣṇu (the god whose weapon is *cakra*—discus), and sing of his glory.

22. This King of kings, the protector of subjects with a view to providing means of livelihood to his subjects, will milk the earth in the form of a cow. Like Indra, he will break down the mountains with the point of his bow, and level the earth as if in a sport.

23. Twanging his irresistible *ājagava* bow in the battle, when he, like a lion with his tail erected, traverses the earth, the evil-doers will hide themselves in all directions.

24. He will perform a hundred horse-sacrifices (*aśvamedha*) at the source of the river Sarasvatī. While the last sacrifice will be performed, Indra (the performer of hundred *aśvamedha* sacrifices) will steal away his sacrificial horse.

25. He will meet the venerable Sanatkumāra alone in the garden of his palace. He will propitiate him (Sanatkumāra) with devotion. He will get from him the pure knowledge which leads one to attain to the Supreme Brahman.

26. Wherever he will go, Pṛthu, of celebrated glory and enormous prowess, will hear various songs and ballads and praise based on his[70] exploits.

27. His *cakra* (sway, army, wheels of his chariot) will be unobstructed and unchallenged. After conquering all the quarters of the earth, he will remove the evil-doers of the world by his heroic lustre. He will be the supreme master of the world whose great glories will be sung by the chiefs of gods and demons."

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

(Pṛthu subjugates the Earth)

Maitreya said:

1. King Pṛthu, the illustrious son of Vena, who was thus eulogised for his excellent attributes and exploits, satisfied

70. *ātmāśrita* : pertaining to Viṣṇu (ŚR.).

those bards by honouring them with gifts as desired by them and by appreciating them.

2. He honoured all the classes of people of whom the Brāhmaṇas were foremost, and also his servants, ministers and family priests, the citizens as well as the rural public, various trade guilds and other prominent subjects.

Vidura asked :

3. Why did the goddess of the earth who can assume multifarious forms assume the form of a cow? When Pṛthu milched her who became the calf and what was the milk-pail ?

4. How is it that he levelled the goddess of the earth who was by nature uneven ? For what purpose did the god Indra carry off his sacrificial horse ?

5. Oh Brāhmaṇa (Maitreya) ! To what state did the royal-sage attain after getting initiated in the knowledge of the Brahman and its personal experience[71] from the venerable Sanatkumāra, the best among the knowers of Brahman ?

6-7. I am a votary devoted to you as well as to Lord Kṛṣṇa (Adhokṣaja). Your honour should narrate to me many other deeds of Lord Kṛṣṇa of sanctifying glory, connected with the account of his former manifestation as Pṛthu. Kṛṣṇa in the form of Pṛthu has milched this cow in the form of the earth.

Sūta said :

8. When he was thus urged by Vidura to narrate the story of Vāsudeva, Maitreya, who was pleased with him in mind, praised him and replied.

Maitreya said :

9. Dear child (Vidura) ! When Pṛthu was coronated and was called as the protector of the public, the subjects with their bodies emaciated with hunger due to barrenness of the earth, approached Pṛthu, the protector and appealed.

10. "Oh King ! We are oppressed by the gastric fire

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71. *Jñānaṁ savijñānam* — In B.G. III. 41, Śaṅkara explains *jñāna* as 'knowledge of the self and other things acquired from the scriptures and the teachers' and *vijñāna* as 'the personal experience—*anubhava* of things so taught'.

just like the wood with fire in its hollow. Today we have approached you for shelter, as you are installed as our king who will provide us with means of livelihood, and are worthy of seeking asylum.

11. Oh King of kings! You are verily the protector of the people and the bestower of the means of livelihood. Therefore, while we have not perished from starvation, Your Majesty should endeavour to supply food to us who are famished with hunger."

Maitreya said :

12. Oh great Kuru ! Having listened to the heart-rending lamentations of his subjects, Pṛthu contemplated deeply for a long time, and at last came to perceive the cause of the scarcity.

13. By his reasoning power he came to the conclusion (that the earth had held up the seeds of herbs, plants and food-grains within herself). Being indignant, he took up his bow and fitted an arrow on it aiming at the earth, just as the enraged destroyer of Tripura (Śiva, did against Tripura).

14. When the earth saw the king with his weapon uplifted, she began to tremble. She assumed the form of a cow and in terror began to run fast like a terrified female deer chased by a hunter.

15. The enraged son of Vena, with eyes blood-red with wrath, and with the arrow fitted to his bow, chased after her whithersoever she ran (for shelter).

16. Running to all the directions (cardinal points) and intermediate directions (e.g. South-east, South-west etc.), to the heaven and the earth and in the space between them, the goddess Earth saw him chasing her everywhere with uplifted weapon.

17. Just as people do not get protection from death, she did not get any asylum in the world against Pṛthu, the son of Vena. Terrified, she returned with a troubled heart.

18. And she spoke to the illustrious king, "Oh Knower of Dharma ! you are kind to the afflicted. Determined as your majesty is on the protection of creatures, protect me as well.

19. Such as you are, why do you intend to kill me who am afflicted and innocent ? How could a person who is regarded as expert in (the niceties of) Dharma, strike women ?

20. Oh King ! Beings (people) do not at all strike the females even though they have committed an offence. Much less would persons like you who are merciful and compassionate to the helpless, do so, Oh King.

21. How can you support yourself and these subjects of yours on the surface of (cosmic) waters after destroying me—a strong boat wherein the whole universe is established ?"

Pṛthu said :

22. "Oh Earth ! I want to kill you as you disobey my commands—You partake of your share in the sacrifices, but you do not yield us wealth.

23. It is not that punishment is disapproved in the case of a wicked cow which every day eats fodder but does not yield milk from her udders.

24. You are dull-witted. You have confined in yourself the seeds of plants etc. created already by god Brahmā. You do not allow them to grow, thus you set me at nought.

25. I shall pacify the afflictions of these subjects who are famished with hunger and are distressed, with your flesh cut down by my arrows.

26. To kill a vile self-conceited fellow—whether a man, a woman or an impotent person—who is merciless to others, is no killing at all, in the case of kings.

27. You are obstinate, arrogant and have assumed a false form of a cow. Having shattered you to sesamum seed like pieces with my arrows, I shall support these subjects by the dint of my Yogic power."

28. The earth began to tremble. She bowed to him who like the god of death[72] bore a form which was wrath incarnate, and spoke to him with folded hands.

The Earth-goddess said :

29. "I pay my obeisance again and again to the Supreme Man who manifested his various forms by his Māyā (power),

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72. ŚR. explains that the body of the god of death is not made of anger.

and appears to be composed of the (three) *guṇas*, though (in reality) by the realization of his essential nature; he has been ever free from the waves of love, hate (etc.) born of *ahaṁkāra* (his false identification) with regard to matter (*adhibhūta*), action (*adhyātma*) and the agent (*adhidaiva*).

30. That Supreme Being, the very Creator who created me as the abode of all *jīvas* (living beings) and as the support of the four classes of creatures composed of the *guṇas* of Prakṛti, has come, with uplifted arm, to strike me down ! To whom else can I resort now for shelter?

31. He who, at the beginning of creation, created this world of mobiles and immobiles by his supra-logical Māyā Power which rests on him (for support) is said to be now ready to protect it by dint of the same Power. Devcted to righteousness (and its promotion) as he is, how does he desire to kill me?

32. The Almighty, though one, appears as many on account of the other, i.e. the Māyā Power. He created god Brahmā and made him evolve the universe. Alas, the intention of the Lord cannot at aH be fathomed by people whose minds are distracted by the invincible Māyā.

33. I bow to the Highest Person, the Creator (of the world) who manifests and withdraws his powers (suitable for the occasion or purpose), and who brings about the creation (preservation and destruction) of the universe by means of his potencies in the form of substance (i.e. five gross elements—*mahābhūtas*), action (senses and deities presiding over sense-organs), the principle of intelligence (*buddhi*) and ego (*ahaṁkāra*).

34. Oh birthless Almighty! It is Your Majesty who as the primeval Boar verily lifted me up from the waters of *Rasātala*, with the intention of establishing the world created by you and consisting of five gross-elements, sense-organs and the inner organ (the heart).

35. Today that very Boar (the upholder of the earth) has appeared as the hero (Pṛthu) who desires to protect his subjects who have resorted to me as on board a ship on the surface of the waters. Your Majesty whose arrows are terrible, certainly desires to kill me for the sake of milk.

36. Oh Warrior! The intention of sovereign rulers (like

you) is certainly not comprehended by people like us, whose paths of minds are deluded by the Māyā which creates the universe consisting of three *guṇas*. I pay my respects to those kings who bring glories to all."

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

(*Milking of the Earth (in the form of a Cow)*

Maitreya said :

1. Having thus praised Pṛthu whose lips were quivering through rage, the goddess of the earth steadied her mind herself (by her reasoning and will power) and addressed the king again, although she was afraid (of him).

2. "Oh King ! Please control your wrath completely.[73] Please consider what I tell you. For like a bee, a wise man takes the essence from everything.

3. Expedients for the accomplishments of the welfare of men in this world as well as in the next, have been discovered and employed by the sages who have realized the truth.

4. Anyone belonging to the later periods, who properly and with faith adopts the measures demonstrated by the ancients, easily accomplishes his objectives.

5. Even if a learned person,[74] disregarding those expedients adopted and tested successfully by the ancients, tries to accomplish those objectives in his own (independent) ways, his objects are never realized, despite his frequent efforts and experiments.

6. Oh King ! It has been observed by me that the herbs and plants which were produced by god Brahmā formerly, were being enjoyed by the wicked who did not undertake religious observances.

7. When I was left unprotected and uncared for by rulers of the people like you (i.e. Vena and other ordinary kings), and when the world was infested with thieves, I swallowed up those herbs and plants (to preserve them within me) for the performance of sacrifices.

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73. Restrain your anger so as to offer me protection (ŚR.).
74. If the text is read as *avidvān*, 'one who in his ignorance' etc. (ŚR.).

8. Due to a lapse of a long period, those plants and herbs within me have become diminished and weak. You should, therefore, try to take them out by some expedient known to be effective in such matters.

9-10. Oh mighty-armed hero ! Oh protector of creatures ! If Your Lordship desires (to provide) nutritious food coveted by creatures, please arrange for a calf, a suitable vessel (milk-pot) and a milk-man competent to draw (my) milk, so that, being full of affection, I shall yield for you all your desired objects in the form of milk, Oh warrior.

11. Oh mighty king ! Make me a level plain so that the waters showered by god Indra may stand on me, even after the rainy season is over. God may bless you."

12. Accepting the agreeable and wholesome words of advice of the goddess of the earth, the king made (Svāyambhuva) Manu as the calf, and milked all the herbs and plants (such as cereals etc.), in his own hand.

13. Similarly, other wise men also extracted essence of everything everywhere. Then others (fifteen including sages) drew out their desired objects from the cow (earth) tamed by Pṛthu.

14. Oh most righteous Vidura ! Then the sages made Bṛhaspati, the calf and drew from the goddess (earth) milk in the form of the holy Vedas, into their own sense-organs (viz. ears, speech and mind).

15. The gods made Indra a calf, and extracted in a vessel of gold Soma-juice, and (nectarine) milk giving mental vigour, splendour, energy and physical strength.

16. (The demonic tribes) Daityas and Dānavas made Prahlāda, the foremost among the Asuras, as the calf, and milked from her wine and decoction (spirituous liquors) in a vessel of iron.

17. (The celestial *artistes*), Gandharvas (heavenly musicians) and Apsaras (heavenly nymphs) made Viśvāvasu the calf, and extracted the milk in the cup of lotus-flower and it became the special Gāndharva honey giving sweetness of voice and beauty.

18. The venerable manes (Pitṛs), the presiding deities of the Śrāddha ceremony performed in memory of the departed

souls, made Aryaman (the head of the Pitṛs) as the calf, and reverentially drew milk in an unbaked earthen vessel and it became *Kavya* (food for the manes).

19. The Siddhas (Semi-divine beings) made Kapila the calf, and extracted in the vessel of the sky the eight super-human powers (*Siddhis*) exercisable by mere will. The Vidyādharas (a tribe of demigods) drew the milk in the form of the art of moving through the sky (in the same vessel with Kapila as the calf).

20. Others (such as *Kimpuruṣas*, a semi-divine tribe) noted for their power of conjuring tricks (*māyins*) made Maya the calf and got from her, magical powers possessed by wonderful beings who can become invisible at will.

21. The Yakṣas and Rākṣasas (demonic beings), Bhūtas and Piśācas (ghosts and fiends) who feed upon raw flesh made the Lord of ghosts (Rudra) as the calf, and extracted in a skull the wine of blood.

22. In the same way, hoodless reptiles, scorpions, serpents and snakes made Takṣaka (the chief of Nāgas) a calf, and drew poison as the milk, in their mouths as the vessels.

23-24. Herbivorous beasts made the bull of Rudra the calf and drew grass as their milk, in the vessel in the form of the jungle. The carnivorous beasts with big tusks and feeding upon raw meat, with the lion (the king of beasts) as the calf, drew in (the vessel in the form of) their body flesh (as their milk). The birds who used Garuḍa (the chief of birds) as the calf, had mobiles (like worms and insects) and immobiles (life fruits) for their milk.

25. With the Banyan tree as the calf, the trees extracted their own respective juices as the milk. Mountains had the highest (mountain) Himālaya as the calf and milked various minerals (as their milk) in (the vessels in the form of) their ridges.

26. All species of beings used their own chiefs as the calf and extracted severally in their own vessels the milk specifically useful as food to their own species, from the earth which yielded all desired objects when she was tamed by Pṛthu.

27. Oh Vidura (son of the Kuru family)! In this way, Pṛthu and others who subsisted on food obtained from the earth

different kinds of milk in the form of their specific food, using different kinds of calfs and milk-pots.

28. Thereafter Pṛthu, the lord of the earth, was highly pleased with the earth-goddess who yielded all desired objects, and affectionate as he was to daughters, he regarded her as his daughter, out of paternal affection.

29. The mighty son of Vena, the king of kings, crushed to pieces mountain-peaks with the ends of his bow and made the surface of the globe of earth almost level.

30. The illustrious son of Vena was a father unto his subjects, as he provided them with means of livelihood. He then constructed on the earth, at different places, suitable houses for them.

31. He founded a number of villages, towns, cities, forts and castles of different types. He built abodes for cowherds and cowpens and planned camping grounds, quarries. He provided agricultural habitations and hamlets on hillsides.

32. Before the time of Pṛthu, there was no such planning and construction of cities, towns etc. in this world. During his reign subjects began to live comfortably at various places (in rural and urban areas) with a sense of security.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

(Pṛthu's Conquest)

(Pṛthu's Horse-sacrifices and Conflict with Indra)

Maitreya said:

1. The king (Pṛthu), thereupon, consecrated himself with the intention of performing one hundred horse-sacrifices at Brahmāvarta, the land of Manu, where the Sarasvatī flows towards the east.

2. Anticipating that Pṛthu would excel his record performance of sacrifices, glorious Indra grew jealous of Pṛthu's grand festival of sacrifices.

3. In that festival of sacrifices, the glorious Lord Hari, the Soul of all beings, the revered father of all the world, and

the ruler of the universe, was perceived directly as the Lord of the sacrifices by all.

4. He was accompanied by Brahmā, Śiva and protectors of the world along with their followers. His glories were being sung by Gandharvas (celestial musicians), sages and troupes of Apsaras (heavenly nymphs).

5-6. Semidivine beings like Siddhas and Vidyādharas, Daityas, Dānavas, Guhyakas and others and Lord Hari's prominent attendants headed by Sunanda and Nanda, Kapila, Nārada, Datta and the great masters of Yoga like Sanaka and others—all devotees of the Lord who were eager to serve the Lord, accompanied him.

7. Oh descendant of Bharata (Vidura)! In that sacrifice the earth which supplies the materials for oblations in the sacrifice acted as a wish-yielding heavenly cow, and gave as milk, all the objects desired and required by the sacrificer Pṛthu.

8. The rivers flowed flooded with all kinds of sweet juices like those of sugarcane, grapes etc. as well as with milk, curds, food, ghee and butter-milk. Trees of gigantic dimensions which oozed out plentiful honey bore fruits abundantly.

9. The oceans brought to him heaps of precious stones as tributes; mountains, four kinds of food; all people along with their protectors[75] paid tributes to him.

10. The mighty Indra grew jealous of this great prosperity of Pṛthu who regarded god Viṣṇu as his Master, and created obstacles in his way (to sabotage his scheme of hundred horse-sacrifices).

11. While Pṛthu, the son of Vena, was propitiating Viṣṇu, the Lord of Sacrifices, with the last (hundredth) horse-sacrifice, the jealous Indra carried away the sacrificial horse, himself remaining invisible.

12. The venerable sage Atri noticed him hurrying through the sky in the disguise of a heretic who mistakes unrighteousness for righteousness and the guise served him like an armour.

13. As directed by Atri, the son of Pṛthu, who was a great warrior, pursued Indra to kill him, and shouted to him in rage "Halt ! Halt".

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75. *lokapālāḥ*—Protectors of the world like Indra—GD.

14. Seeing Indra in that sage-like form with matted hair and body besmeared with sacred ashes, the son of Pṛthu thought him to be Dharma (piousness, religion) incarnate, and did not (feel disposed to) shoot an arrow at him.

15. When the Prince returned without killing Indra, Atri urged him again to slay him, saying, "Oh child, kill this great Indra, who is the meanest of gods as he had obstructed your father's sacrifice".

16. Thus incited (by Atri), the son of Pṛthu, got furious and chased Indra who was fleeing through the sky as Jaṭāyu[76] (the king of vultures) pursued Rāvaṇa.

17. The King of the Heaven (Indra) gave up his own form and the sacrificial horse and disappeared. Taking with him his own sacrificial horse, the hero (Pṛthu's son) returned to (the place of) his father's sacrifice.

18. Witnessing his miraculous deed, the great sages conferred on him the (significant) epithet *Vijitāśva* (conqueror of the horse), Oh Lord (Vidura) !

19. The mighty Indra created very thick darkness under the cover of which he stole again the horse tied with a gold chain from the sacrificial post with the circular wooden ring called *caṣāla* on its top.

20. Atri (again) pointed out Indra hurrying through the sky. But the warrior (Pṛthu's son) did not molest him as he was carrying a human skull and *Khaṭvāṅga* (a club with a skull at the top) in his hands (like a Kāpālaka).

21. Being urged by Atri, however, he indignantly fixed an arrow (on the bow) aiming it at Indra. The king of heaven (Indra) gave up the sacrificial horse, and his guise (as Kāpālika) and stayed invisible.

22. Taking the horse with him, the hero (Pṛthu's son) returned to (the place of) his father's sacrifice, while people of poor understanding accepted the censurable guise assumed (and left) by Indra.

23. Whatever forms were assumed by Indra with the in-

76. *Jaṭāyu*—A son of Aruṇa and Gṛdhrī; king of vultures and younger brother of Sampāti. He tried to prevent the abduction of Sītā by Rāvaṇa, and was killed by Rāvaṇa's treachery. His funeral was performed by Rāma.

tention of carrying away the consecrated horse, were the marks of sins. Here the word *khaṇḍa* is used in the sense of "mark".

24-25. In this way while carrying away the horse with the intention of interrupting Pṛthu's sacrifice, Indra assumed and abandoned deceitful disguise of nude ascetics (Digambara Jainas), red-robed ascetics (Buddhists) and others (such as Kāpālakas). Minds of men, through their misapprehension (of the true teachings of the Vedas), are generally attracted to these pseudo-religious sects as the true religion, as they are charmingly presented with excellent eloquence.

26. When the illustrious king Pṛthu of great prowess learnt this, he got infuriated. He took up his bow and aimed an arrow at Indra.

27. Finding that Pṛthu was determined to kill Indra and appeared of irresistible vehemence and terrible to look at, the sacrificial priests prevented him urging, "Oh highly intelligent and wise king, it is not proper to kill anything else here (at the sacrifice) except the consecrated beast (as enjoined by Vedas).

28. By the force of Vedic incantation of undiminished power, we shall now invoke (and forcibly bring) Indra, the Lord of Maruts who has interrupted your object (of performing this sacrifice) and has lost his glory by your high reputation. Oh King, we shall then forcibly offer your enemy as an oblation to fire."

29. Oh Vidura ! Having thus addressed Pṛthu, the master of the sacrifice, his sacrificial priests, with the ladle (*Śruc*) in their hands, indignantly proceeded to pour oblations in the sacrificial fire, when the self-born god Brahmā appeared and prevented them (from doing so saying).

30. "Indra whom you wish to kill by means of the sacrifice, should not be killed. For Indra designated as Yajña is the manifestation of the Almighty Lord (himself), and gods whom you offered oblations are (mere) forms of Indra."

31. Oh Brāhmaṇas ! consider this great violation of Dharma (leading to propagation of heretic sects) perpetrated by Indra who desires to interrupt the king's performance of the sacrifice. (He may again encourage heretic doctrines to the detriment of the world.)

32. Therefore may Pṛthu who has performed ninety-nine sacrifices be more famous than Indra" (Brahmā then addressed to Pṛthu) : "As Your honour knows the path leading to Liberation, the sacrifices which you have so magnificently performed are enough.

33. May you be blessed (despite the non-completion of this sacrifice). Both you and Indra are the embodiments of Viṣṇu of excellent renown. Hence, it is not proper to cherish anger against the great Indra who is your own self.

34. Oh great king ! Please do not worry about this (interruption or non-completion of the sacrifice). Listen to our words with respectful attention. The mind of the person who contemplates to accomplish what has been frustrated by the Fate, certainly gets extremely infuriated and enters blinding darkness of delusion[77] (and does not get peace).

35. Let this sacrifice be stopped now for there is obstinacy in gods.[78] It is here (due to this sacrifice) that Dharma was violated by heretics created by Indra.

36. Have a look at these people who are being enticed away by attractive heretical doctrines propagated by Indra who maliciously plotted against your sacrifice and stole away the sacrificial horse.

37. Oh son of Vena ! You are a part of Viṣṇu incarnated on this earth now from Vena's body to protect the religion[79] of the people suitable to the present times—religion that declined by the misdeeds of Vena.

38.* Oh sovereign ruler of the people ! Such a ray of

77. v.l. *mano'ti-kaṣṭam* : The mind falls into the darkest hell. This suggests both the reason and undesirable consequences of such attempts against the gods.—VJ.

78. You should give up your prejudice against gods, for the gods, if enraged, will obstruct rainfall and famine will devastate the land.—VJ.

79. Religious tenets based on Vedas and orthodox philosophic systems like Sāṁkhya, Yoga etc.—ŚR.

* VJ. differs : As you have incarnated yourself for the protection of religion, you should consider that your performance of the intended hundredth sacrifice will be an insult to Indra (Prajāpati) and as such you should not perform it. You should completely fulfil the desire of Indra that you should not complete the hundredth horse-sacrifice. Taking into account the all-round auspicious effects of not opposing Indra's will, you

Viṣṇu as you are, you consider the origination of the universe[80] and fulfil the purpose of the proginators of the world (like Bhṛgu and others who created you.) Oh Lord ! destroy the formidable heretic path—the illusion created by Indra which is the source of pseudo-religious sects".

Maitreya said:

39. Being thus advised by Brahmā, the creator of the world gave up his insistance on the performance of the hundredth sacrifice, adopted a friendly policy to Indra, and made peace with him.

40. Those gods who were propitiated in the sacrifice and were disposed to confer blessings bestowed boons upon Pṛthu who had performed many auspicious deeds including the concluding ablution (*avabhṛtha*) at the end of the sacrificial session.

41. Oh Vidura ! The Brāhmaṇas whose blessings were efficacious, and who were faithfully paid the sacrificial money and honoured, became satisfied and pronounced their blessings on the first monarch (Pṛthu).

42. Oh mighty-armed king ! All the manes (*Pitṛs*), gods and sages who were invited by you, have attended and have been worshipped by you paying proper respects and gifts."

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obey the desire of the creator of the universe (viz. myself) that you should perform only ninety-nine sacrifices. By this sacrifice or religious conduct you should destroy the formidable heretic path which is the illusion created by Indra—a source of pseudo-religious creeds.

80. VC. and SD. interpret *bhava* as the 'good' of the universe.

CHAPTER TWENTY

(Pṛthu initiated by Viṣṇu)

Maitreya continued :

1. Even the glorious Lord Vaikuṇṭha (Viṣṇu), the all-pervasive Master and Enjoyer of sacrifices, was highly pleased with sacrifices (performed by Pṛthu). (Manifesting himself) along with Indra, he addressed Pṛthu as follows :

The Lord said :

2 This (Indra) has verily caused obstruction to your hundredth sacrifice. (As) he is begging apology for the same, you should (now) pardon him.

3. Oh King ! The best ones among men who are highly intelligent and righteous, cherish no illwill against creatures (even though) they have offended them, inasmuch as the physical body (so offended) is not the Soul (Hence the irrelevance of retaliation).

4. If persons like you are deluded by divine Māyā, service of elderly people (rendered by you) for a long period, has turned out to be mere fruitless labour.

5. A wise man who has realised that this body is the product of *avidyā* (ignorance about the real nature of the Self), *kāma* (desire) and *karma* (actions of the previous life), cherishes no attachment for it.

6. What wise man who has no attachment to his body will cherish a feeling of mineness to house, offspring or even wealth produced by the body?

7*. The Self (*ātman*) is a changeless one, pure, self-luminous, free from *guṇas*, the substratum of the attributes (of

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* GD. draws a clear contrast between Self (*ātman*) and the body in his com. as follows:

This Soul is different and distinct from the physical body. The Soul is one while bodies are many. The Soul is pure while the body being composed of five elements (*bhūtas*) is impure. The Soul is self-effulgent, self-luminous, while the body is dull, dead. The Soul is beyond *guṇas* but the body is the product of *guṇas* and hence dependent on them. The Soul is the substratum of *guṇas*. The Soul is all-pervasive while the body is limited (by spatio-temporal relations). Due to its all-pervasiveness the

knowledge, bliss etc.), omnipresent (and hence) unveiled by anything, (a detached) witness, and possessing no other Soul,[81] and distinct from the body[82] (which, in contrast with the Soul, changes with childhood, youth and age; is impure, unintelligent; is constituted of *guṇas* and dependent on *guṇas* which produce it; is limited, covered over by houses etc., and is an object of sight; and possesses a Soul distinct from it).

8. The man who thus knows the Soul abiding in him, is established in me. Though he dwells within (the domain of) Prakṛti, he is not affected by its attributes.

9. Oh King! He who, possessed of deep faith (in me) and with no desire of any fruit, always worships me according to his prescribed religious duties (according to his *Varṇa* and *āśrama*) gets his mind gradually purified.

10. When he gets serenity of mind, he becomes unassociated with *guṇas* (worldly objects), and attains pure vision (true knowledge). He enjoys eternal peace, and the absolute Brahmahood which is a state of unconcernedness and equipoise like me.

11. He who realizes this Supreme unchangeable Soul to be quite unconcerned though presiding over the material body,

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Soul is uncovered while the body being of limited dimensions can be covered with dress. The Soul being consciousness by nature and witness to all, is a seer, but the body being a dead material is subject to perception. The Soul is void of another Soul, mind (inner organ), while the body is the receptacle of the Soul. In this way the knowledge of the identity of *jīva* (individual Soul) and *Īśvara* (God)—knowledge which is a means to liberation is explained.

(2) VR. explains the concept of Soul held in the *Viśiṣṭādvaita School*:

The Soul which resides in different types of celestial human or subhuman bodies is one, due to his inherent knowledge which is one (common). He is pure while the body is filthy. He is self-luminous, free from qualities like love, hate, the Seat (substratum) of attributes like knowledge, bliss. Though he is atomic he is all-pervasive due to his knowledge of *dharma* etc. He is not covered by environments such as house, dress etc. He is a direct seer (of his own body, sense-organs) but the body is an object of perception possessing qualities like love, hate, coverable (by clothes etc.). The Soul enters the body and sustains it and while the body is the object to be so sustained. Hence it is distinct from the body.

81. *nirātmā*—Having no controller superior to him.—VJ.

82. *anātmanaḥ paraḥ*—Superior to and distinct from *jīvas* who are devoid of good attributes—VJ.

the sense organs of cognition and action and the mind, attains the highest bliss.[83]

12. *Saṁsāra* (cycle of birth and death) which is a product of the *guṇas* (of *Prakṛti*) pertains to the *liṅga śarīra* (subtle body) which consists of subtle elements, subtle conative and cognitive sense-organs and their presiding deities and the mind —the reflection of *ātman*. That body is distinct from the Soul. Learned persons who are deeply attached to me are not affected by pleasure or pain, while experiencing prosperity or adversity.

13. Oh valiant King ! Being equally undisturbed by pleasure or pain, looking upon the excellent, the middling and the vilest as equals, and having subdued all the sense-organs and the mind, you carry out the duty of protection of all the world with the cooperation of all the people (ministers etc.) appointed by me.

14. Protection of the subjects is the only way to the final beatitude in the case of a king, as he obtains in the next world one sixth of the meritorious acts performed by his subjects. But if he collects only taxes and does not protect his subjects he loses his own merits and becomes responsible for the sins of his subjects.

15. (Considering this). if you are mainly devoted to the righteous duty(*dharma*) as approved by the foremost Brāhmaṇas and handed down by tradition and if you are completely detached from (the *puruṣārthas* like) *dharma* (*artha* and *kāma*) you will protect this earth and will be their beloved king. In a short while, you will see Siddhas (like Sanaka, Sanandana) who will come to visit you.

16. Oh ruler of men ! Ask for whatever boon you like from me. I am bound to you on account of your virtues and character. I am not easily available by the performance of sacrifices, austere penances or by *Yoga*, as by nature I like to dwell with those who are even-minded and look upon all as equals."

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83. v.l. *abhayam*—Liberation (*Mokṣa*).

Maitreya said :

17. Thus advised by the All-pervading god Viṣṇu, the preceptor and the Lord of the universe, Pṛthu, the conqueror of the world respectfully received Hari's command with his head.

18. He affectionately embraced Indra (the performer of hundred sacrifices) who, being ashamed of his own act, was touching his (Pṛthu's) feet (to beg his pardon), and gave up enmity with Indra.

19. Thereupon the venerable Lord (Viṣṇu), the Soul of the universe, was offered worship by Pṛthu who clasped his lotus-like feet with overflowing devotion.

20 The god whose eyes were like petals of lotus and who is a well-wisher and friend of pious saints, was about to leave. But looking at him (Pṛthu), he lingered on to confer his grace, and did not depart.

21. The first monarch (Pṛthu) could not see Hari as his eyes were full of tears. Nor could he speak as his throat was choked with tears. With folded hands he stood, embracing Hari in his heart.

22. Then wiping out his tears, he beheld with unsatisfied eyes the Supreme Man who stood before him touching the ground with his feet[84] and placing His palm on the elevated shoulder of Garuḍa (the enemy of serpents). Pṛthu spoke to him (as follows).

Pṛthu said:

23. Oh Omnipresent Lord ! From you—the Supreme Lord of gods like Brahmā who can confer boons on others—what wise man would seek for boons craved after by persons dominated by ego (*ahaṁkāra*), the product of *guṇas* (or enjoyable to those who regard the material body as Self). Oh bestower of Mokṣa (Liberation), I do not seek them as they are available even to embodied beings in Hell, Oh Lord.

24. Oh Lord ! I do not desire even that Mokṣa (final

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84. Normally gods do not touch the earth with their feet. This action of Hari indicates that he was so overwhelmed to shower his grace on Pṛthu that he forgot himself and touched the ground with his feet—ŚR.

beatitude) (if there be no opportunity to taste) the honey from your lotus-feet, which surges from within hearts of great saints and oozes out of their mouths. Bless me with ten thousand ears for hearing your glory. This is the boon (I seek).

25. Oh Lord of excellent fame! The breath laden with small drops of the nectar of your lotus-like feet which issues from the mouth of great saints, restores the knowledge of the Self to false Yogins who have forgotten the Path of Truth. Hence enough of boons to us (as there is absolutely no possibility of us—devotees being affected by passions like love, hate etc. Bhakti comprises within it the bliss of liberation).

26. Oh Lord of excellent renown! If, by a lucky chance, one happens to listen even once, to your auspicious glory in the assembly of noble saints, how can an appreciator of virtues forget it—unless he is a brute. For the goddess Lakṣmī earnestly seeks your glory with a desire of assimilating those virtues (or concentrating in her all *puruṣārthas* or objectives of man's life).

27. Hence, being full of ardent desire, I would, like Lakṣmī (the lotus-handed goddess) be eagerly devoted to you, the Supreme most Person, the receptacle of all excellent attributes. May there be no jealousy[85] between us who are vieing with each other for the service of one and the same Lord, and have concentrated our minds on your feet alone.

28.* Oh Lord of the World! There may arise jealousy in the mind of Lakṣmī, the mother of the worlds, as we have

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85. As there was between Indra and myself for the performance of sacrifices—ŚR.

* (i) VR. gives an additional interpretation :

Oh Lord of the world! The fruit of sacred duties like sacrifices bestowed on us by Prakṛti the mother of the universe is unimportant and disastrous as it leads to Saṁsāra. But you are so magnanimous and kind to the poor and distressed that you do not see any wrong in it and you elevate that insignificant act of sacrifice yielding ordinary commonplace fruit to the dignity of the means leading to Mokṣa (Liberation). For such commonplace fruits are trifles to one who is satisfied in one's natural Self.

(ii) VJ. differs. The gist is as follows :

The danger that there would arise a quarrel between Pṛthu and Lakṣmī

a desire to share her work (of rendering service to you). However you who are compassionate to the poor and distressed, magnify (the value of) our insignificant services. Of what account (importance) is she (Lakṣmī) to you who are satisfied in your own natural Self.

29. (As you are kind to the poor and pitiable) pious persons (who are free from attachment) resort to you (even after attainment of knowledge). You are above the deluding effects of the *guṇas* of Māyā.[86] We do not know whether the righteous souls cherish any ulterior motive other than the act of remembrance and contemplation of the feet of the Lord.

30. That you addressed the words, "Seek a boon" to me who am your devotee, your words are, I think, deluding to the world. If the world is not bound by the cords of Your speech (Vedic injunctions) who could be so deluded again as to perform the usual (ritualistic) actions.

31.* Oh Supreme Lord ! An ignorant[87] man is indeed

(as is natural in common rivals) is not possible as both of them were devotees of the Lord :

Oh Lord of the universe ! There will be naturally an injurious rivalry among persons under ordinary kings. But there is no cause for such rivalry amongst us (Lakṣmī and myself). In our actions, viz. your worship, what we do is very little. You magnify it as you are compassionate to the poor. Conferring blessings even for a small act does not however mean that you change an atom-like insignificant act into a mountain.

(iii) VC. regards this a characteristic of a warrior-devotee. I shall face opposition with mother Lakṣmī. We desire to perform her work, viz. service of your feet. Let her rest on your bosom. As a son, I shall serve your feet. I am not afraid that Lakṣmī, as compared with me, is more ancient and great. But as you are kind to the weak and meek, you magnify our insignificant service. As I am confident of my power, I am not concerned with Lakṣmī's pleasure or displeasure.

86. From the minds of your devotees, you dispel the delusion caused by the *guṇas* of *Māyā*.—VR. and VD.

* (i) VR. : Being deluded by your Māyā, a person becomes devoid of true knowledge. If such ignorant person fortunately adores you and requests you for *artha, kāma* etc.—objects other than you,—he remains separate from you. This means, Oh Lord, you have compromised your own greatness. Just as a father guards the interests of his minor and ignorant child, you should do what is good for him (even without his request to do so).

(ii) VC. : You should not test your devotee by asking him to select a boon, for people are likely to select other material things. You should therefore, yourself do what is good for us according to you.

(iii) GD. : Oh Lord ! This ignorant person is separated from your real Self by your powerful Māyā. Hence he seeks from you son's property and other things. You further entice him by telling him to choose a boon, just as a father etc.

87. *abudhaḥ* : If the word be taken as *budhaḥ* the verse means : It is indeed by your Māyā that man is separated from you, his real Self.

separated from you—his real Self—by your Māyā. Hence he covets after something else (like *artha, kāma* etc.). Just as a father, of his own accord (without being requested by the child to look after his interests), looks after the good of his child, you yourself also should do what is good for us.

*Maitreya said** :

32. The Omniscient Lord who was thus eulogised by Pṛthu, (the first monarch of the earth) said, "Oh King ! May your devotion in me remain (constant). Fortunately, you have such a (firmly devoted) mind towards me, as would enable one to get over my Māyā which is so difficult to cross.

33. Therefore, Oh Protector of the People, you carry out my commands carefully. People who abide by my commands are blessed with happiness here and hereafter."

Maitreya said :

34. Having thus gladly received the deeply significant compliments of the royal sage Pṛthu (the son of Vena), and being worshipped by him, Acyuta (the imperishable Lord) blessed him (with his grace) and thought of departing.

35-36. Gods, sages, manes (Pitṛs), Gandharvas, Siddhas, Cāraṇas, Serpents, Kinnaras, Apsaras, men, birds and various creatures and the attendants and followers of Viṣṇu were regarded as Viṣṇu (The Lord of Sacrifices) and were honoured with devotion by respectful address, donation of wealth, folding of palms by the king—after which they departed.

37. Carrying away (as it were) the mind of the royal sage as well as that of his preceptor, Lord Acyuta (Viṣṇu) also returned to his own abode (Vaikuṇṭha).

38. Having paid obeisance to the Lord, the god of gods, who though unmanifest by his nature, (out of grace) revealed himself to Pṛthu and became invisible again, Pṛthu returned to his capital.

Hence even though he be wise or learned, he longs for other things (such as sons etc.).

* Verses 32 and 33 are not commented by ŚR but are annotated by VR., GD. and others.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

(*Pṛthu explains Dharma to his subjects*)

Maitreya said :

1-3. (Pṛthu retired to his capital city)—the city was decorated everywhere with wreaths of pearls and garlands of flowers, with silk drapery and decorative arches of gold, and with extremely fragrant incense (burning). Its streets and squares were besprinkled with water scented with sandal and *agaru* (agallochum). They were beautified with flowers, *akṣatas* (unbroken rice pigmented with red *kuṁkuma*), fruits, tender barley-shoots, parched grains of rice, and illuminated with lamps. It was adorned with plantain trees as well as with young arica plants laden with fruits and flowers, and was beautified with wreaths of tender leaves of (mango and other) trees.

4. His subjects, along with beautiful girls wearing bright gold earrings, went forward to greet him with lamps, materials of worship, and all other auspicious articles (such as curds) prepared (for the occasion).

5. In the midst of blowing of conchs and sounding of kettledrums and chanting of Vedic hymns (by Brāhmaṇas), the warrior who was untouched by pride, in spite of the singing of his eulogies, entered his palace.

6. The highly renowned king was honoured everywhere on his way. He (in return) honoured the residents of his city as well as his subjects from rural areas. He was pleased with them, and granted them the boons they liked.

7. Performing many such and other achievements, the most adorable king of great virtues and pious conduct, governed this globe of the earth. After establishing his pure reputation, he ascended to the highest abode (Vaikuṇṭha).

Sūta said :

8. Oh Śaunaka (Leader of the sacrificial assembly in the Naimiṣa forest)! Vidura, the great devotee of the Lord respectfully adored Maitreya, (the son of Kuṣīrava), who was eulogising the primal king's (Pṛthu's) worldwide renown of all excellent attributes which was glorified by highly virtuous people. He spoke to him (Maitreya, as follows):

9. Pṛthu who received adorations from all gods, and who bore in his arms the mighty and heroic lustre of god Viṣṇu wherewith he milked the earth (in the form of a cow), was coronated by Brāhmaṇas.

10. What wise man will not listen to the glories of Pṛthu on the remnants of whose valorous achievements, all the rulers of the world, the guardian deities and the people, still subsist to their hearts' content—Please, therefore, narrate to me in details his pious deeds.

Maitreya said :

11. Dwelling in the land (*doāb*) lying between the rivers—the Gaṅgā and the Yamunā, Pṛthu enjoyed only those pleasures which came to his lot, as a result of the fruition of his past deeds, as he desired to exhaust (the stock of) his merit (and not due to addiction to pleasures).

12. His writ ran unobstructed everywhere. He wielded his sceptre (sovereignty) over seven island-continents[88]—with the exception of Brāhmaṇas and devotees of Hari (who was like their progenitor).

13. Once upon a time, he was consecrated for the performance of a great sacrifice. There assembled, Oh Vidura, a congregation of gods, Brāhmaṇa sages and royal sages.

14. When all the respectable persons were duly honoured according to their merits and positions, he (Pṛthu) stood up in that assembly, like the moon in the midst of stars.

15. He was tall with muscular long arms; he was fair in complexion; his eyes were reddish like a red lotus; his nose was shapely; his countenance, beautiful. He was gentle in appearance; his shoulders were rounded. His rows of teeth and smiles were beautiful.

16. That powerful monarch had a broad chest, full, bulky loins, stomach shaped like a *pipal* leaf and beautified with three folds; his navel was deep and circular like a whirlpool, his thighs were like pillars of gold, and the fore part of his feet was slightly plump (elevated) and prominent.

88. They are : Jambu, Plakṣa, Śālmali, Kuśa, Krauñca, Śāka and Puṣkara.

17. He had fine, curly, dark and glossy hair on the head. His throat was (marked with three spiral lines) like a conch. He wore two costly silk garments, one around his waist and one around his upper part of the body.

18. Due to his sacrificial vow, he laid aside his ornaments. So the natural splendour of the limbs of his body became manifest. He looked dignified with (upper part of) his body covered with the skin of a black-antelope, and with Kuśa grass in his hand he had completed the prescribed religious acts (of that time).

19-20. He looked around with his calm, soothing, affectionate eyes. With a view to thrilling the assembly with joy, the Lord of the earth delivered the following address which was pleasant to hear, couched in beautiful figurative expressions, polished, deep in significance, unagitated and calm. He was, as if, briefly narrating, at that time, his own experiences for the benefit of all.

The King said :

21. "Oh members of this assembly, please listen to me. May auspiciousness betide you all righteous people who have come here. Persons desirous of knowing (the true nature of) Dharma—righteousness—should state (fully) their concept (of Dharma) before the righteous people. (Hence I speak out to you my concept.)

22. I have been installed here as a king to govern and dispense punishment (to anti-social elements), to protect the people, to provide them their means of livelihood, to control them severally within their respective spheres of duties.

23. May those regions which yield whatever one desires and which are reached—according to the knowers of the Vedas—by persons with whom (Lord Hari), the Witness of the previous deeds of all persons, is pleased, be attainable to me, by my performance of this duty.

24. The monarch who collects taxes without imparting instruction to his subjects in their respective religious duties, shares their sins only, and forgoes his own good luck.

25. My dear subjects ! You should, therefore, (continue to) perform your own righteous duties, fixing your mind on

god Viṣṇu, and remain free from jealousy. It will be in the interest of the subsistence of your king hereafter, as well as in your own. You would thereby be rendering a great favour to me.

26. Oh purehearted and sinless *Pitṛs* (manes), gods and sages, kindly give your hearty approval (to my request): 'May the doer, the preceptor and the consenter of any action share equally its fruit in the next world.'

27. Oh most worthy men, Mīmāṁsakas ! According to some (believers in God), there exists the Lord of sacrifices (the dispenser of the fruit of *karmas*). For here and in the next world, there are seen some rare regions full of moonlight (meant for enjoying pleasures), as well as bodies brilliant like moonlight (which are the mediums for enjoying worldly pleasures as a result of *karmas*).

28-29.* In the opinion of Svāyambhuva Manu, Uttānapāda, even of king Dhruva, the royal sage Priyavrata, my paternal grandfather Aṅga and such others, as well as that of god Brahmā and Lord Śiva, as also that of Prahlāda and even of Bali (whom Viṣṇu pushed down to subterranean regions), Gadādhara (Lord Viṣṇu) must necessarily be postulated as the dispenser of the fruit of *karmas*.

30.* With the exception of Mṛtyu's daughter's son (i.e. Vena) and others who are deluded about religion, and deserve to be pitied (lamented), others believe that there must be one common cause (i.e. God) who mainly dispenses the three *puruṣārthas* (viz. *Dharma*, *Artha* and *Kāma*), heavenly bliss and Liberation.

31. The relish and desire of serving the Lord's feet, increase with the passing of each day. Like the river (Gaṅgā) flowing out from his (Viṣṇu's) toe, this ever-increasing desire

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* These verses refute the view of Pūrva-mīmāṁsā (and that of other heretic doctrines attributed to Indra's Māyā) about the non-existence of God. The *karma* doctrine must be accepted to explain the variety and inequality in the world. Karma, by itself, is inert (*jaḍa*) and deities like Indra, Varuṇa are themselves dependent (*paratantra*). For the dispensation of the fruits of *karma* and for explaining inequality in the world, we must postulate an independent God possessing powers of doing, undoing and changing differently : *ataḥ svātantryeṇa kartum akartum anyathā-kartum samarthena Parameśvarena bhāvyam* /—SR.

to serve, washes off instantaneously the sins, accumulated through all the past lives, in the minds of people who are tormented with pains and afflictions.

32. A person who takes shelter at His feet, gets all the impurities in his mind washed off, develops special powers of non-attachment and self-realization, and does not return to *saṁsāra* (the cycle of births and deaths) which brings with it all miseries.

33. With faith in sure achievement of your goal (Liberation) according to your capacity and merit, and without any hypocrisy, you worship him only—whose lotus-like feet yield all your desires—with (i.e. dedicating to him) all duties pertaining to your vocations, and with all the powers of mind, speech and body (i.e. performance of meditation, prayer and worship), and with duties (of your respective caste and stage of life—*varṇa* and *āśrama*).

34.* Though, by nature, he is pure knowledge and consciousness, and devoid of any attribute, he manifests himself here as sacrifice possessing innumerable attributes (or essential requirements etc. of sacrifice), such as rice (and other sacrificial materials), qualities (of things such as whiteness, blackness), actions (such as threshing, winnowing of grains), words (*mantras* used in sacrifices), purpose (for which acts are meant), the

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* (i) VC. : Verses 34 and 35 state that *karma* is essentially impure, inert (*jaḍa*) and *rājasa* (characterised by the *guṇa*, *rajas*). But if it is, devoutly dedicated to God, it is transformed into pure *sāttvic* nature, and yields fruit. Hence the author advises *karma* mixed with *bhakti* (devotion).

(ii) VJ.: This verse illustrates the term *Svakarmabhiḥ* in the previous verse (33). Nārāyaṇa described in *Ait. Up.* 1.1. is attained to by a righteous person who performs sacrifices of many kinds, and of many attributes (or requirements), such as materials (*puroḍāśa* etc.), qualifications viz. good heredity or birth from particular parents (of the sacrificer), actions i.e. Vedic incantations for gods like Indra, Agni, by the sacrificial priests, the interest of these gods in the sacrificer, and the characteristics of gods, e.g. Indra, holdidg a *Vajra* (or god Nārāyaṇa, the wielder of Sudarśana disc). By this sacrificial act, the mind gets purified, and the higher knowledge which terminates the *saṁsāra*, dawns on the sacrificer. It is by such deeds that Janaka and others attained final beatitude (B.G. 3.20).

(iii) SD : *Karmas* dedicated to God lead to God-realisation. God is devoid of bad attributes (*aguṇa*) and possesses innumerable auspicious attributes (*aneka-guṇaḥ*).

intention or object (of performing the sacrifice), the efficacy (of sacrificial materials so used), and means (by which the sacrifice is known, e.g. *agniṣṭoma*).

35.* Just as fire in (a piece of) wood appears as possessing all the characteristics (e.g. size, shape etc.) of the (piece of) wood, the Omniscient Lord (though essentially the Highest Bliss itself) appears as intellect or consciousness (which identifies itself with the external objects) in the body, which is a product of *Pradhāna* (Prakṛti or Primordial Nature), *Kāla* (the Principle of Time which sets in commotion or agitation the *guṇas* of *Prakṛti*), *Vāsanā* (impressions unconsciously left on the mind by the past actions which give rise to pleasure or pain) and *dharma* (merit or demerit constituting the fate or *adṛṣṭa* of an individual) and manifests himself as the fruit of religious acts (e.g. a sacrifice).

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* (i) The previous verse identifies God with sacrifice. In this verse, the fruit of sacrifice is stated to be the manifestation of the Lord—ŚR.

(ii) **VR.** : This verse identifies the Lord with Jīva, the enjoyer of the fruit of *karma*, as well as the fruit of the act itself (*atha karma-bhoktṛ-jīva-rūpatvaṁ tat-phala-rūpatvaṁ cāha*). The Lord is the innerdweller (*antaryāmin*) of *jīvas*. As such, through the medium of *jīva*, he gets the experiences of external objects in relation to body (due to *dharma-bhūta-jñāna*, the theory of attributive consciousness of the Self). The body is the product of *Pradhāna*, *Kāla*, *Vāsanā* and *adṛṣṭa*. The Lord is hence regarded as the fruit of sacrifice, (such as Svarga). But despite these experiences, the Lord is not contaminated by the blemishes etc. of the *karmas*, just as fire appears to share the characteristics (e.g. length, curvature etc.) of the burning wood, (and yet actually it shares none of them).

(iii) **VJ.** : Nārāyaṇa, the Omniscient Lord enters Jīva who, having renounced everything, retains a formal relation with Jīva. The pious persons (*jīvas*) know that Nārāyaṇa is the fruit of the righteous acts, and the dispenser of the fruits as well, according to *Brahma Sūtra—phalam ata upapatteḥ* (3.2.39 acc. to *Madhva bhāṣya*).

(iv) **VG.** : God realization is the fruit of *karmas* dedicated to God. After such dedication of *karmas*, God, out of his grace, manifests himself. But this degree of god-realization varies directly with the intensity of faith, devotion, knowledge in the dedicated one's acts to the Lord, even as the fire differs with the quality of the wood like *sandal*, *agaru*, *khadira*. (The first two give out sweet fragrance while the last does not.)

(v) **GD.** : This All-pervading Lord who enjoys the experience of happiness of intellect—due to contacts of the objects to the body, is also realized to be the fruit of acts (such as sacrifice etc.)

36.* Oh! How blessed I am that my subjects of firm vows, always worship Hari by perfofming their prescribed religious duties in this world—God Hari who is the preceptor (or Father) and the Supreme Lord of divinities who receive oblations in sacrifices. These (subjects) render me great favour.

37.** At no time may the martial lustre of the ruling princely families, born of great military power and effluence, dominate over the race of Vaiṣṇavas, the votaries of the unconquerable god (Viṣṇu) and that of the Brāhmanas who (though lacking in opulence) are resplendent on account of their forbearance, austere penance and learning.

38. Even Lord Hari, the most ancient person, the foremost among the greatest (of gods like Brahmā) is gracious unto Brāhmaṇas. It is by paying obeisance to their feet that he got Lakṣmī (the goddess of wealth) who never forsakes him and great glory that hallows the world.

39. The Absolutely independent Supreme God who resides in the hearts of all and to whom Brāhmaṇas are dear is certainly pleased by service rendered to them (Brāhmaṇas). Therefore, may the Brāhmaṇa race be served sincerely, and with all your hearts, by persons who are self-controlled, disciplined and devoted to the righteous duties (prescribed in the Bhāgavata way of life) pleasing to him.

40.*** By constant association with and service of the

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* Pṛthu hereby confirms the religious tendencies of his subjects who with a firm resolve worship the Lord (ŚR. and others) but VJ. treats this as a compliment to Brāhmaṇas who as teachers and pupils are born from Hari's mouth, and always conduct their religious duties, and as such, they should be worshipped.

**(i) VR. : The verse indicates that Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas should mutually respect and favour each other : 'May not the votaries of Viṣṇu, the Brāhmaṇa caste which stands resplendent with its forbearance, austerities and such other virtues, be provoked by the Princely houses puffed up with pride in their power and affluence'. VJ. endorses the same view.

(ii) VC. : For firm establishment of devotion to god, this verse prohibits the insubordination to Vaiṣṇavas and Brāhmaṇas.

***ŚR. : This verse removes the following doubt :

(i) If one always serves Brāhmanas, the performance of sacrifices—offering oblations to gods in sacrificial fires—will be neglected. This laxity in religious duties will not lead to purity of mind and the final beatitude which depends on it.

Brāhmaṇa (caste), the mind soon attains purity and serenity, (and consequently) the person, automatically (without any effort to get knowledge or Yogic practice) attains the highest bliss and final emancipation. Is there any better mouth of gods who receive oblations through fire than the Brāhmaṇa race ? (The fruit of sacrifices and of knowledge is obtained by service of Brāhmaṇas).

41. The infinite Lord who is essentially knowledge incarnate and the indweller of all creatures, does not verily relish so much the oblations offered to the sacrificial fire which is devoid of consciousness, as certainly those offered with faith, into the mouths of the Brāhmaṇas in the names of adorable divinities (like Indra, Varuṇa) to be invoked in sacrifices, by the knowers of the Truth.

42. With a view to understanding the true import of the Vedas in which the universe is clearly reflected as in a clean mirror, they (Brāhmaṇas) bear (in their memories) the pure and eternal Vedas with faith, austere penance, auspicious conduct, control of speech unrelated to Vedic studies, self-control and concentration of mind. (Hence Brāhmaṇas are superior to fire due to their knowledge of Vedas).

43. I would like to bear on my crown the dust from the lotus-like feet of those (Brāhmaṇas), for, the sin of the man who wears this dust, immediately disappears, and all excellent attributes abide in him, Oh noble ones.

44. Affluence (in every respect) and accomplishments of desires seek to follow a man who is the receptacle of excellent qualities, looks upon character as his wealth, is full of gratitude, and resorts to wise elderly people. May the race of Brāhmaṇas, and that of cows, Lord Viṣṇu, along with his votaries (and followers) be gracious unto me."

(ii) VR. : By service of Brāhmaṇas, the deities to be propitiated by performance of sacrifices are served.

(iii) VJ. : The Brāhmaṇa caste is in constant contact with the Lord. By serving them, one obtains serenity of mind and immediately attains to the highest bliss, the final beatitude (Mokṣa). By service of Brāhmaṇas, one gets the fruit of performance of sacrifices, knowledge.

Maitreya said:

45. All *Pitṛs* (manes), gods and Brāhmaṇas felt highly pleased at heart with the king who spoke thus. Those pious souls expressed their approbation and praised him.

46. True is the Vedic text that a man attains to the higher worlds by means of a son. For the sinful Vena (Pṛthu's father) who was killed by Brahmanical curse, has crossed over the dark Hell (through Pṛthu).

47. And Hiraṇyakaśipu also was about to enter the dark hell for reviling the Lord, but crossed over it through the power of piety of Prahlāda (his son).

48. Oh foremost warrior, father of the earth ! May you live long for eternal years, as you cherish such devotion to Lord Viṣṇu, the sole ruler of all worlds.

49. Oh King of holy fame! With you as our ruler, we regard ourselves as having today Lord Viṣṇu as our ruler, as you reveal to us the narratives of Viṣṇu whose renown saves others from infernal regions and who is favourable to Brāhmaṇas.

50. Oh Lord! It is the nature of the great, whose hearts are full of pity, to love their subjects. Hence, it is no wonder that you exhort your dependants this way.

51. Oh King ! You have brought us today across the hell—we who, losing their insight due to our past deeds designated as Fate,—have been wandering in Saṁsāra.

52. Salutation to you, the most powerful Person with dominant Sāttvic attributes, who inspiring the Brāhmaṇa race by your force support the Kṣattriya race and *vice versa*, and inspiring both Brāhmaṇas and Kṣattriyas support the universe by virtue of your own power.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

(Sanatkumāra's Sermon to Pṛthu)

Maitreya said :

1. While people were thus extolling Pṛthu of mighty prowess, there approached four sages, brilliant like the Sun.

2. Attended upon by his servants, the king saw those lords of sages descending from the heavens. They were recognized to be Sanaka and others by their lustre which absolved the worlds of sins.

3. Just as the lord of sense-organs (*jiva*) rushes forth to the objects of senses, Pṛthu, the son of Vena, along with the courtiers and attendants, immediately stood up (and went forth to the sages), as if to recover his vital breaths which sprang forth at their sight.[89]

4. When the sages accepted preliminary reception (*arghya*)[90] and occupied the seats (offered to them), the courteous king, who was hypnotised with their august presence, bowed down his head out of modesty, and worshipped them with due formalities.

5. (To purify himself) he sprinkled the hair on his head with (the sanctifying drops of) water with which he washed their feet. He, thereby, observed the course of conduct of the virtuous, to show respect to them.

6. The king was endowed with deep faith and self-discipline, and was full of joy. He addressed those elder brothers of Lord Śiva, who occupied seats of gold, and were looking like sacrificial fires in their respective altars.

Pṛthu said :

7. "Oh! What meritorious deeds I must have performed that I have the privilege of seeing you, the abodes of auspicious-

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89. As ŚR. explains, it is the belief that when an elderly person comes, the vital breaths of young people immediately go forth to receive them. The youth catches back his vital breath, by immediately standing up to show respect, and by bowing down before the elders.

90. *arghya*—Water and other articles respectfully offered to gods or venerable persons. ASD. 51.

ness, who are very difficult to be perceived even by masters of *Yoga*.

8. What is very difficult to attain here and hereafter to a person unto whom Brāhmaṇas (like you), and gods Śiva and Viṣṇu along with their attendants are gracious!

9. Just as *Mahat* and other principles (or Brahmā, Manu and other makers of the world)—which are the causes of the universe, do not visualize the Omniscient *ātman* (Soul), people do not at all see you even though you roam over the world (to help them to attain their *puruṣārthas*).

10. Verily, blessed are those saintly householders who, though penniless, have in their houses materials for worship such as water, mat of (*darbha*) grass, accommodation (or floor), the master of the household and his dependants ready (for receiving) the worthies.

11. (Unwelcome) like the trees which are haunted by poisonous serpents, are the houses which, though fully furnished with all kinds of riches, are not hallowed by the holy water used for washing the feet of Viṣṇu's devotees.

12. Welcome is your arrival, Oh preeminent Brāhmaṇas who, determined to secure liberation, have been faithfully and with resolute mind, observing great vows (like lifelong celebacy) since your very childhood. (Or.....Brāhmaṇas whose course of observances of vows is followed by other ignorant persons desirous of Liberation).

13. Oh spiritual Masters! Is there any hope of good for us who regard the (achievement of) objects of senses as the goal of life and who, by our own deeds, have fallen into the *saṁsāra*, the bed of miseries.

14. The etiquette of enquiring after welfare of the guests is not applicable (or desirable) in the case of your honours, who are absorbed in the bliss of the *ātman* (Soul), and who are above the thoughts of welfare or otherwise.

15. You are the friends and well-wishers of the distressed. With full faith in you, I, therefore, wish to enquire of you how one can speedily achieve the *Summum bonum* (Mokṣa) in this *Saṁsāra* ?

16. It is obviously certain that the unborn Lord Nārāyaṇa who shines as the Soul of the self-knowing sages, and

who manifests himself (in the heart of the devotees), goes about in the world, in the form of Siddhas (like you), for showering his grace upon his votaries."

Maitreya said :

17. Having heard Pṛthu's beautifully worded, logical, deeply significant, brief, melodious speech, Sanatkumāra slightly smiled, and verily replied with pleasure.

Sanatkumāra said :

18. "With the welfare of all beings at your heart, a good enquiry has been made by Your Majesty, even though you know its answer, Oh great King! For such is the nature of the righteous.

19. The meeting of the righteous is highly approved by both (the speakers and the members of the audience) for, their dialogues and enquiries increase the happiness of all.

20. Oh King! Your honour has definitely a constant and abiding love for eulogizing the excellent attributes of the lotus-like feet of Lord Viṣṇu (the enemy of demon Madhu). Such constancy of love is difficult to be found in others. Such love (if generated) completely shakes off the sticky dirt of inner passions and desires in the heart (which is difficult to remove).

21. In the Śāstric texts which have made a thorough enquiry (about the good of beings), it has been positively decided that perfect non-attachment to things other than the Soul (e.g. one's own body), firm and constant love of attributeless Brahman and the Self—these constitute the means of the final beatitude of men.

22-25. Attachment for attributeless Brahman and non-attachment to the entire non-self material world (*un-ātman*), both effect and cause are easily generated by intense faith, performance of righteous duties towards the Lord,[91] the desire

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91. *Bhagavad-dharma-caryayā*—In the case of all (even uninitiated ones) : (i) By performing the five *mahāyajñas* and other round of religious duties for propitiating the Lord—VR.

(ii) By religious duties according to one's own caste and stage of life (*varṇāśrama*)—VJ.

(iii) GD. emphasizes the dedication of these religious duties to the Lord.

to know (the details about the Truth), firm faith in the spiritual path of *Yoga*,[92] meditation about the Lord of *Yoga*,[93] and constant listening to the holy stories of the Lord of hallowed renown; by cessation of desire to associate with the *tāmasa* people who take pleasure in wealth, and with the *rājasa* people who revel in the enjoyment of sensual pleasure, and by non-attachment to the filthy lucre and to sense-gratification which are highly valued by them, through love of seclusion[94] for enjoying the blissfulness of the Self (*ātman*) except on occasions when the drink of the nectar of Hari's excellent glories is available;[95] by practising non-violence, by following the course of conduct prescribed for the highest ascetic order called the *paramahaṁsas*, by drinking the highest form of nectar in the form of Lord Hari's stories, by eschewing desires and by observing rules of self-discipline called *yama* (abstention) and *niyama* (observance),[96] by refraining from slandering (and condemning other paths of God-realization prescribed in scriptures), by desirelessness, and by endurance of

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92. *ādhyātmika-yoga-niṣṭhayā*—In the case of the initiated ones : With faith in the meditation as a part of adoration of the Lord as enunciated by the spiritual preceptor —VR.

93. Service of great Yogis like Kapila—GD.

94. *vivikta-rucyā*—Taste limited to food uncontaminated by the touch of other caste; by the delight and satisfaction one gets in the realisation of the Soul—VR.

95. By attending the congregations when Hari's *līlās* are sung—VC. *By renunciation of objects of sensual enjoyment which are as if the pleasure-garden to the body and sense-organs, by non-acceptance of flower-garlands, cosmetics, women which are agreeable to them, by the sense of enoughness (*alaṁ-buddhi*) about carnal pleasures enjoyable by the body —VJ.

96. Patañjali gives the following list of *Yamas* and *niyamas* :

(i) *Yamas* (abstentions)—Abstinence from injuries, from falsehood, from theft, from incontinence and from acceptance of gifts (VSP. ii. 30).

(ii) *niyama* (observance) : Cleanliness, Contentment, Self-castigation, Study and Devotion to Īśvara (VSP. ii.32).

VJ. quotes from *Yājñavalkya Yoga Sāstra* 10 *Yamas* but as given in ASD 455 the lists include 10 or 12 Yamas according to different authors. ASD 290 quotes the following 10 *niyamās* :

Śaucam ijyā tapo dānaṁ svādhyāyo 'pastha-nigrahaḥ/
Vrata-mauno'pavāsaṁ ca snānaṁ ca niyamā daśa//

opposite states (such as heat and cold, pleasure and pain); by devotion to Hari that blossomed for the constantly glorifying Lord Hari's excellences which form the ornaments to the ears of his devotees through faith and deep devotion.

26.* When his attachment and delight in Brahman becomes firmly established, a man seeks a spiritual preceptor. Just as fire ignited from *araṇī* (a piece of wood of the Śamī tree used for kindling fire by friction) consumes its own source (the piece of wood from which it arose), the man, by force of his knowledge and non-attachment burns down his subtle body consisting of five subtle elements[97] and enveloping his Soul, in such a way as to render it unrevivable.

27**. When the screen or sheath (of the subtle body enveloping the Soul) which, till then intervened between the Super-Soul (*Paramātman*) and the Soul, is destroyed,[98] the

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97. *Pañcātmakam* : (i) Consisting of five *kleśas* viz. *avidyā* (nescience), *ahaṁkāra* (ego), *rāga* (attachment), *dveṣa* (hatred) and *abhiniveśa* (instinctive clinging to worldly life and bodily enjoyment and the fear of being deprived of this—ASD.39) ŚR. and GD. VC. endorses this view while SD. supports the first interpretation given.

(ii) Consisting of five Kośas (sheaths) which lying one within the other make the body enshrining the Soul. They are : (1) *annamaya*, (2) *manomaya*, (3) *Prāṇamaya*, (4) *Vijñānamaya* and (5) *ānandamaya*. *Sarvopaniṣatsāra*, however, gives *Prāṇamaya Kośa* the 2nd place before *Manomaya Kośa*.

* According to VR., firm fixation of love in Brahman leads to the grace of spiritual preceptor (and not vice versa). With the force of knowledge, renunciation and the love or delight in Brahman, a man burns down the seed of *karmas* (both merit and sin) which is the cause of the body (and *Saṁsāra*).

VJ. explains that the heart is an external *upādhi* (condition or attribute) and its burning does not harm and not the Soul or seed so enveloped by the external sheath.

98. What interrupted the knowledge of the relations between the Supreme Soul and the *jīva*.

** VJ. differs: When the 'heart' and its attributes e.g. knowledge, disappear, the *jīva* does not perceive any difference—within and without like a blind person. When in the Saṁsāra, there is a screen between the Supreme Lord and the *jīva*, there exists a semblance of knowledge like doubt, as in a dream. But when the subtle body is lost, the *jīva* also will disappear. And the Saṁsāra with its modicum of knowledge is preferable to the vanishing of the *jīva*. Who would then bother about Liberation (Mukti)?

person becomes freed from all the attributes[99] pertaining to the subtle body which has been burnt down. (Thenceforth) he does not perceive (his subjective states of pleasure, pain etc.) which are within him,[100] nor objects (e.g. a pot, a piece of cloth) which are external to him, just as a man awakened from a dream does not see the objects he had been perceiving in his dream.[101]

28. (It is in the state of wakefulness and dream) while this *upādhi* (conditioning) of mind continues, that man can perceive himself (the seer), objects of senses and what is beyond them both (viz. *ahaṁkāra* which establishes relation between them—the seer and the seen), and not otherwise (as in sleep).

29. (For example), if, anywhere, (reflecting) condition —*upādhi* like water,[102] mirror or such other condition is present, a man can see the difference between himself (the object of reflection) and the other thing (his own reflection) and not in the absence of the reflecting medium.

30. The mind of those who brood over objects of worldly enjoyment is distracted by their senses which are attracted to objects of worldly pleasure, and thereby the in-

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99. The attributes like love, hate which deserve to be shed off (heya-guṇāḥ)—VR.

100. All internal blemishes, e.g. love, hate etc.—VR.

101. ŚR. explains: Just as a person who in a dream sees himself to be a king attended upon by an army of soldiers, sees no more his kingship and the army when the dream is over.

S.D.: In the dream the externals are friend, foe etc. and the internals are the honour, dishonour etc. meted out by them. These disappear when the dream is over.

102. *jalādau*—But VR. reads *jaḍādau* and interprets: *jaḍa* is the inert body. When the limiting condition like this inert body continues as interruption, the *jīva* experiences separateness from his Self and the Supreme Soul. But in Liberated stage this limitation of the body ceases, he sees no such difference between the two.

VC. thinks that this *upādhi* (limiting condition) is destroyed by knowledge and the *jīva*, by his powerful love of God enjoys the blissful nature of the Lord.

SD. thinks that the extreme difference between the Soul (*ātman*) and Brahman is due to ignorance. When real knowledge dawns, he realizes the Brahmahood in *ātman* (*ātmano Brahmātmakatvam paśyati*).

tellect loses its power of thinking and discrimination, just as the water from a pool is (imperceptibly) sucked up by the roots of a clump of grass.[103]

31. As a consequence of the loss of the reasoning capacity memory is lost. The loss of memory[104] results in loss of knowledge and wisdom. The wise people call this loss of wisdom as the covering of the Self through one's own Self.

32. In this world, there is no worse loss of his self-interest to a man than the loss of his own Self (through himself) for whose sake every other thing in the world becomes dear (lit. on whom depends the dearness of every other thing in the world).[105]

33. Constantly brooding over wealth and objects of senses leads to the loss of all *puruṣārthas* (goals to be achieved in life). Having thus lost knowledge of Brahman and worldly knowledge, he enters(= is born in) immobile *yonis*—births e.g. a vegetable).

34. A person who desires to cross the dense darkness (of *Saṁsāra*), should not entertain attachment to anything whatever. For that attachment is extremely harmful to *Dharma, Artha, Kāma* and *Mokṣa* (the four *puruṣārthas*).

35. Even among these objectives of life, *Mokṣa* (Liberation) is acknowledged as the highest goal of life. For, the remaining goals of life, are always subject to the fear of death.

36. For the *jīvas* of the higher order (like Brahmā) and lower order like us who are created after the equilibrium of the three *guṇas* of *Prakṛti* was disturbed (at the time of creation), there is no security and happiness, as all their blessings and hopes (of attaining their objectives) are ruined by the All-powerful Time.*

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103. *stamba*—The canal or outlet from a tank—VJ.

104. *bhraśyatyanu smṛtiś cittam* / VR. connects the words *anu-smṛtis* and interprets it as 'the sense of the proper time for *upāsanā* or *Yoga* (*anusmṛtir upāsanam, Yoga-kālānusandhānam* /)

105. Cf. *ātmanas tu kāmāya sarvam priyam bhavati* /

—*Bṛhad. Upa.*4.5.6.

* After verse 36, VJ. gives the commentary on 3 verses which are not noted by other commentators. The Bhāgavata Vidyā Peeth, Ahmedabad edition does not give the text of those verses but only the commentary. Hence they are not included here.

37. Therefore, Oh King, you realize that you are (the same as) the Lord (the only existing reality)—the Lord who manifests himself and directly shines everywhere in the Self as *antaryāmin* (the inner controller) in the hearts of all mobile and immobile *jīvas* who are covered (i.e. invested) with body, sense-organs, vital airs, intellect and ego (*ahaṁkāra*).

38.* I take shelter with the Supreme Soul who is eternally free, extremely pure, highly enlightened, Reality itself and who has overpowered the *Prakṛti* (primordial nature) contaminated by Karmas (of various *jīvas*), and in whom appears this universe of superior and inferior things (or of cause and effect) as Māyā, which disappears due to (the dawn of) discriminating wisdom like (the dispelling of) the misapprehension of a garland of flowers as a serpent.

39.** You (therefore) take resort to Lord Vāsudeva as your asylum[106]—Lord Vāsudeva, through devotion (and concentration) on the splendour[107] of petal like toes of whose lotus-feet the saintly devotees so easily cut the knot of the egotism (*ahaṁkāra*) formed at the heart by *karmas*, that even recluses and ascetics who have cleared their mind[108] (of all worldly thoughts and kept it vacant) and have controlled their senses, are unable to do so.

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* VR. emphasizes the point that the Lord is not directly affected by Karmas, ignorance etc., but it is through the *jīva* (*kṣetrajña*) which is his body (as he is the *antaryāmin*) that he experiences these.

106. *araṇam*. VD. treats this as a pun : *a-raṇam* who is beyond fight; If you do not resort to Vāsudeva, you will have to battle with your sense-organs which by their brute majority will defeat you.

107. *vilāsa*—beauty which increases every moment—VC., VD.

108. *rikta-matayaḥ*—Whose minds have no support of the Lord—GD.

** (i) The above verses expound the path of knowledge which is difficult. Hence these two (39 and 40) verses describe *bhakti* (the path of devotion)—ŚR., VC.

(ii) VR. treats the last two lines of the verse as qualifying the saintly devotees who meditate on nothing else but the Lord and who control themselves.

(iii) VC.—*Vilāsa-bhaktyā*—through the devotion to the ever-increasing beauty of petal-like toes of the lotus feet of Vāsudeva and *bhakti* i.e. devotion, is both the means and the end.

OR : Through worshipping in a rich way; or
Trough meditation over or memory of his toes.

40. There is a great trouble here to those who have not resorted to the Lord as a boat for crossing the ocean of *saṁsāra* which is infested with crocodiles in the form of sixfold [passions viz. *kāma* (desire), *krodha* (anger), *lobha* (avarice), *mada* (conceit), *moha* (delusion), *matsara* (jealousy) or the mind and five senses]. For they desire to cross it (*saṁsāra*) by painful means (e.g. practice of Yoga). You should therefore make the adorable feet of Lord Hari as a boat and reach the other end of this impassable ocean of *saṁsāra* easily without any difficulty."

Maitreya said :

41. The king to whom the real nature of *ātman* (Soul) was thus expounded by Sanatkumāra, the son of god Brahmā, the knower of Brahman, praised him appropriately and enquired.

The king said :

42. Oh venerable Brāhmaṇa! Lord Hari is compassionate to the afflicted. He had formerly conferred his grace upon me. You all have now come to consummate it.

43. Your venerable Selves, merciful as you are, you have translated into reality the blessing in its entirety. Everything that I possess, including my own self, belongs to the saintly souls who have graciously returned it to me as a favour. What can I give to you?

44. My life, wife, sons, houses with all their furnishings, kingdom, army, earth, treasury—everything is offered to you although it already belongs to you.

45. And a person who is well-versed in Vedas and Śāstras really deserves to command an army, (to rule over) a kingdom, to direct military operations and to govern all the world.

The duties pertaining to God being the reverse of *saṁsāra*, the knot of *ahaṁkāra* formed by *karmas* is very easily cut asunder, while the recluses control their senses—an impossible task, an evidence of their dull-wittedness. It it easy for the righteous *Bhaktas* to destroy *ahaṁkāra* but it is not possible for *sannyāsins* to achieve, for they being vacant-minded are 'intellectless' while the *bhaktas* have their mind filled with God. Bhaktas enjoy the beauty etc. of God to the full.

46. A Brāhmaṇa eats his own food, wears the clothes belonging to him and offers his own belongings. It is through his (Brāhmaṇa's) grace that Kṣattriyas and others enjoy their own food.

47. You are past-masters in the Vedic lores. In your discourse about *ātman* (and other spiritual matters), you have succinctly and definitely explained to us the nature of the Lord as above. Abounding in mercy as you are, may you be forever pleased with your action of redeeming the afflicted. Who can return your obligations except by folding his palms in reverence or (become an object of ridicule in his supposed attempts to repay your kindness)."

Maitreya said :

48. Those masters of *ātma-yoga* (the Yogic path of self-realization) were worshipped by the first monarch Pṛthu. They appreciated his righteous character and rose up to the heavens while people were looking on (agape).

49. Pṛthu (the son of Vena), the foremost among great Souls, became firmly established in his Soul due to concentration achieved by their instruction in the spiritual lore. He felt as if[109] he had achieved all his desires in life.

50. It was as an offering to Brahman that he performed all his actions at the proper time, at the proper place, to the best of his ability, according to proper formalities, according to his means and property.

51. Thus with concentrated mind, he consigned the fruit (of his deeds) to Brahman. He remained unattached by regarding his Self as distinct and beyond Prakṛti, a mere witness to all actions.

52. Just as the Sun (remains unattached and unsoiled by the objects on which it shines), the king, though leading the life of a householder and endowed with imperial majesty and splendour, remained free from egotism (*ahaṁkāra*), and hence unattached to the objects of the senses.

53-56. While he was, in this way, doing his prescribed duties properly and in time, with his heart fixed on his *ātman*

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109. *iva*—Being a true devotee, his real satisfaction was in devotion. This is implied by *iva*—VD.

(Self), he begot through his queen Arcis five sons who were resembling and agreeable to him. They were Vijitāśva, Dhūmrakeśa, Haryakṣa, Draviṇa and Vṛka. But Pṛthu was a part of Lord Viṣṇu. For the protection of the created world, only Pṛthu combined in him (and manifested) powers of all *lokapālas* (protectors of worlds like Indra, Varuṇa), from time to time as was necessary (according to the exigency of the situation). He bore significantly the title *Rājā* by delighting his subjects with his thoughts, words and deeds, and pleasing Soma-like (*saumya*) qualities as if he was another king Soma (the Moon or the Soma—juice—which has *rājā* as its epithet). Like the Sun (evaporating water from the earth and collecting it in clouds), he levied taxes from the world only to give it back to the people (for their welfare) and governed them (as the Sun gives light and heat to them).

57. By his majestic splendour he was unassailable like Agni (Fire-god); he was unconquerable like the great Indra; in forebearance he was like the earth; he was like the heaven (*Svarga*) in granting desired objects to his subjects.

58. Like the rain-god he showered to the satisfaction (of his subjects) all that they desired; like the (unfathomable) sea, he was too deep to be understood; in his firmness he was like Meru, the king of mountains.

59. He was comparable to Yama-dharma, in dispensing punishment; in marvellousness (in scenes, findings of ores etc.), he was like the Himālayas. He had rich treasure like Kubera (The god of wealth). He possessed immense undivulged treasures like Varuṇa.

60. In physical strength, force and energy and in his ability to move anywhere he was like Vāyu. In his irresistibility he was comparable to god Śiva.

61. He was a compeer of the god of Love in beauty; in spiritedness he was like a lion; in fatherly affectionateness he was like Manu; while in his lordship over man, he was like god Brahmā.

62. He was Bṛhaspati in his knowledge of Vedas, while in self-control he was like Lord Hari himself. While he was comparable to himself only in his devotion to cows, Brāhmaṇas, preceptor, votaries of Hari and in qualities like modesty, humility, good nature and work for the benefit of others.

63. As his glory was loudly sung by people everywhere in the three worlds, he reached the ears of women just as Rāma entered the ears of the saintly people.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Pṛthu's penance and ascension to Heaven

Maitreya said :

1-3. The self-controlled son of Vena, (Pṛthu), the protector of subjects, had made the arrangement of fostering his creation, (viz. by founding of agriculture, and of human habitation like cities, villages etc.). He provided for the livelihood of the mobile and immobile creatures. He supported the practice of religion (*dharma*) by pious people. He carried out the mission of the Lord for which he was created in this world. One day, finding himself to have grown very old, he entrusted to his sons his daugther-like earth which was as if crying due to separation from him. Unattended by any one (servant), he retired to the penance-forest along with his queen while the subjects became depressed in mind and disspirited.

4. Without any interruption in the observance of rules of self-discipline, there too he began to practice a course of austere penance, highly approved by *Vānaprasthas* with the same zeal and determination which he showed formerly in the conquest of the world.

5. He lived upon bulbous and ordinary roots and fruits, and occasionally on dry -leaves. For some fortnights, he took water only, and thereafter, he subsisted on air (only).

6. In the summer, the warrior-sage practised *pañcāgni sādhana* (in which one has to sit in the Sun and in the midst of four burning fires in four directions around). In the rainy season, he exposed himself to the downpour of rain. In the winter he stood immersed in cold water upto the neck and slept on the bare-ground (all through the year).

7. He practised endurance, controlled his speech and sense-organs, he observed celibacy and mastered *prāṇāyāma*

(breath-control). He practised the most austere type of penance with a desire to propitiate Lord Kṛṣṇa.

8. Due to the practice of that austere penance, which gradually reached perfection, his balance of Karmas became exhausted and he became pure in mind. By means of *Prāṇāyāma* (breath-control), all the six passions were completely subdued and the bondage (of *vāsanā*) was cut asunder.

9. Pṛthu, that prominent person, worshipped the Supreme Man by that very highest Yoga which venerable Sanatakumāra explained to him as the best path to *ātman*.

10. As the righteous king was performing the duties sacred to the Lord and was unceasingly exerting himself with faith, he developed complete devotion to the glorious Brahmaṅ exclusively.

11. His (Pṛthu's) mind became purely Sāttvic (without any admixture of other guṇas like *rajas* and *tamas*) through adoration and service of the Lord. He attained to knowledge combined with renunciation—knowledge which became sharpened by his devotion which went on increasing continuously through constant remembrance and comprehensive realization of the Lord's greatness. It is with such knowledge that he tore off the sheath called *jīva*[110]—the knot of egotism (*ahaṁkāra*) in the heart—which is the basis of doubts and misapprehensions.

12. When his concept of self-body identification was dispelled and he realized the real nature of his Soul, he became desireless and disinterested even in the mystic *yogic* powers (like *aṇimā, laghimā* etc.) that were acquired by him. He gave up the attempt to attain the knowledge wherewith he

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110. *Jīvakośa*—the subtle body (*liṅga śarīra*) with its internal and external organ —VJ.

VG.: To Pṛthu, whose mind became purely *Sāttvic* by service of the Lord, the knowledge of the science of Brahman (*Brahma vidyā*) combined with non-attachment, manifested itself. Real votaries of God are so much attracted by the sweetness of *Bhakti* that they discard *Brahma vidyā* which automatically comes to them, and they destroy without any effort their subtle body (*liṅga deha*) through their intense devotion. It was the impatience of Pṛthu to go to Lord's region to serve him directly that he accepted *Brahma vidyā* to destroy his *upādhi* (limiting condition) of *jiva kośa*.

tore off his sheath (called *jīva* or egotism which is source of doubt). For so long even a recluse (exerting on the path of *Yoga*) does not feel devotion and attachment for the stories of Lord Kṛṣṇa, he will not cease to be attracted by the Yogic discipline (and mystic powers attained by *Yoga*).

13. Thus at the time of the end of his life,[111] the great hero concentrated his mind firmly in the Supreme Soul and stabilising himself in Brahman,[112] he cast off his mortal coil.

14. He closely pressed both his heels on his anus. He slowly forced up his vital airs (from the *mūlādhāra cakra*).[113] He held vital airs up (progressively) at the navel and then at heart, chest, the throat and the head, i.e. the place between the eyebrows, (i.e. through the following *cakras* or mystical plexuses: *Maṇipūra*, *manas* or Solar plexus, *anāhata*, *viśuddha* and *ājñā*).[114]

15-16. By degrees he conducted up his breath upto the crown of his head and made it occupy *Brahma-randhra* (the aperture in the crown of the head through which the Soul escapes on its leaving the body). Freeing himself from all desires, he merged the wind element in the body with the outer Vāyu element, the earth element (solidity in the body) with the Pṛthvī (earth) element, the vacuum (in the apertures constituting sense-organ) with the cosmic element *ākāśa* (ether) and the liquid in the body with the element water—each in its own source. (For his own knowledge) he then contemplated the merger of cosmic elements (as follows:)—earth into water, water into fire, fire into wind and wind into the cosmic *ākāśa* (which is the product of *Tāmasa ahaṁkāra*—ego of *Tāmasa* type). This process is called *Laya-cintana* contemplation of (the happening of) the process of absorption.

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111. *kāle*—When the fund of his *karmas*—Prārabdha—was exhausted—VR., VJ.

112. *Brahmabhūtaḥ*—(i) He became like Brahman by the manifestation of eight attributes—VR.

(ii) He realised that he depended on Brahman—VJ.

113. A mystical plexus situated between the anus and the organ of generation.

114. For details about these *cakras* vide: Sir John Woodroff—*Serpent Power*; and Leadbeater—*The Chakras*.

17.* He absorbed the mind (implying presiding deities as well) into the senses,[115] the senses into the subtle elements from which they severally emerged. These (the ether, the senses and mind merged into subtle elements as described above) he carried higher still and he contemplated the above objects along with *ahaṁkāra* (I-ness) as merged in the Mahat *tattva* (the principle of cosmic intelligence).

18.** He (Pṛthu) merged the Mahat, the ground of all *guṇas* (evolutes) into *jīva* conditioned by Māyā. By the power of his knowledge and renunciation, Pṛthu—still a *jīva* conditioned by Māyā—became established in the pure Brahmahood and cast off the conditioning Māyā attached to the Self.

19. His wife, the great queen Arcis, though too delicate to touch the bare ground with her feet, followed him to the penance-forest.

20. Though she (queen Arcis). became extremely emaciated due to her intense devotion in participating in the austere observances (such as sleeping on the bare ground) and religious duties of her husband, by rendering personal services

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115. For the mind is drawn by the senses in the world of varied experiences and hence it is said to be absorbed in them.

* VJ. interprets this according to the general law of merger (*laya*) viz. the effects are to be absorbed into the cause. Thus the senses are merged into the *Taijasa-ahaṁkāra*. Its presiding deities in those of the presiding deities of *Vaikārika ahaṁkāra* and their bodies into the *Vaikārika ahaṁkāra*. The elements *Pṛthvī* etc. along with their qualities like smell, touch etc. are absorbed in the *Tāmasa ahaṁkāra* (*bhūtādi*). These three types of *ahaṁkāras* (along with senses etc.) merge into the *Mahattattva* (Principle of cosmic intelligence). And Rudra, the presiding deity of *ahaṁkāra*, is absorbed into god Brahmā, who presides over the *Mahat*.

** VR: (The last two lines): Pṛthu who was practically free from the effects of the *karmas*, realised the Supreme Being in himself. By dint of his knowledge and renunciation, he became free from the remaining *karmas*. He thus became liberated, established in his own essential nature.

VJ. refutes the idea of Liberation of *advaitins*. The process of Pṛthu's liberation was as follows: Pṛthu merged Brahmā, the presiding deity of the *Mahat* into Lakṣmī and the principle *Mahat* into unintelligent Prakṛti. Lakṣmī with Prakṛti was absorbed into Hari. By force of his knowledge and dispassionateness, Pṛthu did this and attained the *Sāyujja* form of Liberation.

VC. : Pṛthu became a Pārṣada (attendant) of the Lord in Vaikuṇṭha.

GD. : Pṛthu was able to abandon his subtle body (*Liṅga-śarīra*).

to him and by leading the sage's way of life (such as subsisting on roots, fruits etc.). She did not feel any affliction, as she was satisfied with the loving regard and affectionate touch of her beloved husband's hand.

21. Having observed that the body of the protector of the earth, her own beloved husband, became completely devoid of consciousness, life etc., the pious lady wept for a while and got it placed on the funeral pyre on the ridge of the mountain.

22. She bathed in the waters of the river, performed the prescribed rites. Having given libations of water to the departed Soul of her husband, the performer of noble deeds, she paid obeisance to the celestial gods who had assembled there to witness her self-immolation, she went round the fire three times and meditating on the feet of her husband, entered the burning funeral pyre.

23. Seeing the chaste lady perform self-immolation after her husband, Pṛthu, the great hero, thousands of goddesses who were competent to confer boons, began to praise her, along with their consorts.

24. They showered flowers on that peak of the mount Mandara. While the celestial trumpets were blowing, they spoke (in praise of her) to each other.

Goddesses said :

25. "Oh ! What a blessed wife is this who, with all her heart, served her husband, the king of kings, just as Lakṣmī does to the Lord of Sacrifices (Nārāyaṇa).

26. Following her husband Pṛthu, this chaste lady really proceeds to regions higher than ours. Look ! Arcis is going up beyond us, by virtue of her noble deed incomprehensible to the unrighteous.

27. What is verily difficult to be achieved by those mortals who, though the span of their life on the earth is uncertain, attain to spiritual knowledge (of actionlessness) leading to the region of the Lord (Liberation).

28. He is definitely deceived—a veritable enemy of his own Self who after great difficulty attains to the life as a human being, capable of leading to Liberation (Mokṣa), is attached to objects of pleasure."

Maitreya said :

29. While the heavenly damsels (goddesses) were praising her, Arcis (the queen of Pṛthu) reached the region of her husband—the region which Pṛthu (the son of Vena) whose mind was concentrated on Lord Viṣṇu (Acyuta), and who was the foremost amongst those who realized the Soul, attained.

30. Of such glory and prowess was king Pṛthu, the Supreme most mighty monarch. I have described to you the history of the king of noble deeds.

31. He who, with faithful and attentive mind, reads, listens to or recounts this extremely holy life of Pṛthu, would attain to the region of Pṛthu.

32. By reading this, a Brāhmaṇa would become preeminent in Brahmanic lore, a Kṣattriya, the ruler of the world, a Vaiśya, the leader of his guild and a Śūdra (listening to it) would attain the most preeminent position (like a man of Sūta community).

33-34. After hearing this account thrice with faith and reverence, a man or a woman, if devoid of issue, becomes blessed with the best progeny, and if penniless, he/she becomes the wealthiest; An obscure person, attains good renown; a dull-witted one would become a scholar; this is a means of securing prosperity to men, averting evils and inauspiciousness.

35. It blesses with wealth, glory, longevity, heavenly blessings and removes the impurities of the Kali-age. Those who aspire after full achievement of the four *puruṣārthas* (goals of life) viz. Dharma (righteousness), Artha (wealth,) Kāma (enjoyment of life) and Mokṣa (Liberation), should regularly and with faith listen to this story of Pṛthu which is the best means of securing *puruṣārthas*.

36. A king intending to undertake the conquest of the world starts his expedition after listening to this, the kings against whom he marches will receive him with tributes as was done to Pṛthu.

37. Even though one gets auspicious fruits mentioned above from listening to Pṛthu's life, one who gives up all desires and bears pure, motiveless devotions to the Lord, should listen, narrate and read this holy life of Pṛthu, the son of Vena.

38. Oh Vidura (the son of Vicitravīrya), the story of Pṛthu which reveals the greatness of the Venerable Lord has been narrated to you. A mortal who devotes his mind to it, attains to the goal achieved by Pṛthu.

39. A person who devoutly listens to or narrates the story of Pṛthu everyday, becomes free from attachment and develops intense love and devotion to the Lord whose feet serve as a boat to cross the sea of worldly existence (*saṁsāra*).

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

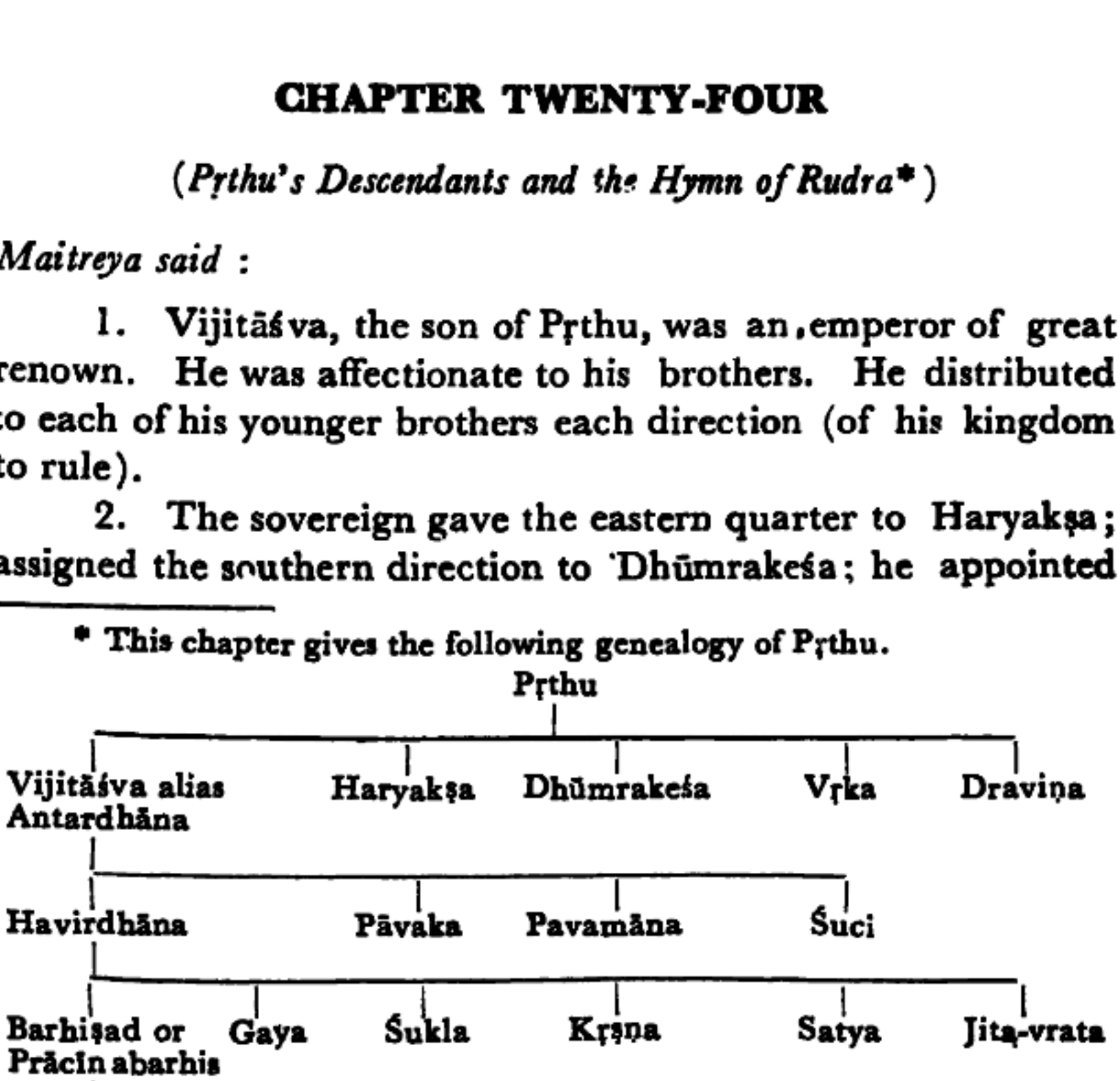
(*Pṛthu's Descendants and the Hymn of Rudra**)

Maitreya said :

1. Vijitāśva, the son of Pṛthu, was an emperor of great renown. He was affectionate to his brothers. He distributed to each of his younger brothers each direction (of his kingdom to rule).

2. The sovereign gave the eastern quarter to Haryakṣa; assigned the southern direction to Dhūmrakeśa; he appointed

* This chapter gives the following genealogy of Pṛthu.



V.P. confirms this genealogy except about the number of Pṛthu's sons According to V.P. 1.14.1, Pṛthu had only two sons Antardhāna and Vādin. Vṛja and Ajina instead of Satya and Jita-vrata are the brothers of Prācīnabarhis (V.P. 1.14.2). The hymn of Rudra is a new contribution in the Bh.P. and it is not in V.P.

(his) brother named Vṛka to the western quarter, and gave the fourth direction (the North) to Draviṇa.

3. Vijatāśva obtained from Indra the power of making invisible movements and came to be designated as Antardhāna. He had three sons by (his queen) Śikhaṇḍinī who were highly beloved by all.

4. They were former firegods by name Pāvaka, Pavamāna and Śuci who were born (as human beings) by the curse of Vasiṣṭha, and who subsequently regained their godly status by practice of Yoga.

5. Antardhāna who did not kill Indra even though he knew that Indra stole the sacrificial horse,[116] got Havirdhāna (a son) by his (another wife) Nabhasvatī.

6. Looking upon kingly duties, such as exacting tributes, inflicting punishment, levying taxes, as harsh and ruthless, he relinquished them under the pretext of undertaking a long sacrificial session.

7. Even there (while engaged in the sacrificial session), the king who realized his Self, worshipped the Supreme Soul who is perfect and annihilates the afflictions of his devotees, and attained to His region, by pure and perfect meditation.

8. From Havirdhāna, (his queen) Havirdhānī begot six sons viz., Barhiṣad, Gaya, Śukla, Kṛṣṇa, Satya and Jitavrata.

9. Oh descendant Kuru (Vidura) ! Barhiṣad, the eldest son of Havirdhāna, the most fortunate lord of men (*Prajā-pati*) was a pastmaster in sacrificial lore as well as in the science and practice of Yoga.

10. (He was called Prācīnabarhis as) the surface of the whole earth was covered over with Kuśa grass with their ends pointing to the east, for he went on performing sacrifices (successively) one after another, each close to the place reserved (used) for the previous sacrifice.

11. On the advice of Brahmā, the god of gods, he married Śatadruti, the daughter of the presiding deity of Seas. She was still a girl but beautiful in every part of the body. In the marriage ceremony, when she went round the fire, beauti-

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116. Vide Supra IV. 19-20.

fully decorated with ornaments, the firegod (himself) became enamoured of her, as he did in the case of Śukī.[117]

12. Gods, demons, celestial singers (Gandharvas), sages, Siddhas (a tribe of demigods), men and serpents were captivated by the young married girl, with the melodious jingling of her anklets ringing in all directions (while she walked).

13. Prācīnabarhis had ten sons called Pracetas, from Śatadruti. All of them bore the same name, observed the same vows and were equally well-versed in religion (or Dharmaśāstra).

14-15. When ordered by their father to beget children, they entered the ocean to perform penance. They propitiated the Lord of Penances (Hari), by undergoing austere penance for ten thousand years. With perfect self-control, they (all the while) meditated on and worshipped him, repeating (to themselves) what was imparted to them by Lord Śiva, whom they saw (revealed to them) on the way, conferring his grace on them.

Vidura said :

16. Please narrate to us, Oh Brāhmaṇa, how the meeting between the Pracetasas and Lord Śiva took place on the road, and tell us what advice of deep import was he pleased to impart to them (out of his grace).

17 Sages, freeing themselves from all attachments have been meditating on Lord Śiva as their coveted goal. Hence contact with the Lord is very difficult, for embodied beings in this world, Oh Brāhmaṇa sage.

18. Though finding delight in his Self, Venerable Lord Śiva accompanied with his terrible Śakti (power of destruc-

117. v.l. *stukīm*—A slender continuous stream of ghee poured into the fire.

Śukī—According to all commentators, except VJ., this refers to the episode when the seven Sages were conducting a sacrificial session, Fire-god was overcome with passion at the sight of their wife. Svāhā, the wife of Agni (Fire-god) assumed the form of that lady and satisfied him. She then assumed the form of a female parrot (*Śukī*) and deposited his semen in a clump of grass. VJ. thinks that Śukī was a princess who was abducted by the Fire-god through lust, while she was going round the fire. In the case of Śatadruti, he could not physically do so. Hence he loved her on the mental plane only.

tion) moves about in the world for the proper maintenance of the world-order.

Maitreya said :

19. Receiving their father's command reverentially (lit. on their heads), the pious Pracetasas set their minds zealously on practising penance and proceeded towards the West.

20. They saw a very big lake, slightly smaller than the sea in expanse. It was crystal-clean like the mind of the noble Souls, and abounded in happy acquatic beings.

21. It was (as it were) a rich mine of blue and red lilis, lotuses that blossom by night, by day and by twilight and blue lotuses (*indīvara*). It was resounded with the warblings and notes of (waterbirds like) swans, cranes, ruddy geese and ducks (Kāraṇḍava).

22. It was surrounded by lush growth of trees and creepers which were thrilled with[118] the sweet musical humming of intoxicated bees. It presented (as if) a festive occasion (celebrated) by the winds, by scattering of the pollen from lotuses, in all directions.

23. The Princes were wonderstruck to listen to the celestial, classical[119] vocal music of Gandharvas ravishing the mind—music which followed[120] the playing of instrumental music of tabors (*mṛdaṅga*) and Paṇava.

24-25. At that very moment, they noticed Śiva, the foremost among gods, coming out of that lake, along with his attendants. His complexion was like a mass of red-hot gold. His throat was blue-coloured. He had three eyes. His smiling countenance showed his inclination to shower his grace (on his devotees). His glory was being sung by the followers of gods (like Gandharvas and Kinnaras). As curiosity was

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118. VR. thinks that the ends of creepers intertwining trees were the hair standing on their ends in the case of the trees which heard the music. While VC. and GD. regard the thick clusters of buds on them as the result of the thrill of the music.

119. *mārga* and *deśī* are styles of singing. *mārga* is the classical style (cf. Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa I.4.36 *agāyatāṁ mārgavidhānasampadā*).

120. v.l. *mṛdaṅga-paṇavādyavat*—accompanied by playing on *mṛdaṅga* and *paṇava*.

aroused in them, the Princess bowed down to him as soon as they saw him.

26. The Venerable Lord (Śiva) who removes the afflictions of his devotees (seeking his shelter), and who loves righteousness, was pleased with those (Princes) who were experts in religion, possessed high moral characters and who were happy (to see him). He spoke to them.

Śrī Rudra said :

27. You are the sons of Vediṣad (Barhiṣad). I know what you intend to do. May you be blessed. (It is) for conferring grace on you that I have revealed myself to you.

28. He is certainly dear to Me, who, completely submitting himself, has directly resorted to Venerable Lord Vāsudeva who is beyond the subtle Prakṛti consisting of the three attributes (*Sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*) and also the entity called *jīva*.[121]

29.* A person conscientiously and firmly devoted to his own righteous duties, attains to the position of god Brahmā after hundred births, and reaches me if possessed of still more excessive merits. But a votary of Lord Viṣṇu, after the end of this mundane body, attains to the region of Lord Viṣṇu which is beyond *saṁsāra*, just as we (Rudra and other divinities) do after the termination of our office (and dissolution of our subtle bodies).

30. You, votaries of the Venerable Lord (Viṣṇu), are as dear to me as the Lord himself. And to the devotees of the Lord, no body else than me, is more dear anywhere.

31.** This is a sacred and highly auspicious hymn leading to the Final Beatitude. This should be constantly repeated

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121. : He is superior to the principle known as Lakṣmī designated here as *jīva* and *tamas*.

*VJ. differs :...after enjoyment of the status or region of Brahmā, the *jīva* goes to Lakṣmī which is not subject to change. It is in the *Pralaya* stage that all come to the Omniscient Lord.

** Please listen to what I tell you. It should constantly be repeated (to oneself). It explains how the Supreme Soul is distinct from Prakṛti and Puruṣa. Hence it is sacred and auspicious inasmuch as it secures the *Puruṣārthas* (Dharma, Artha, Kāma) and is a means to Liberation. Hence I am narrating it to you—VR.

secretly (in strict privacy). I shall now relate it to you. Please listen (attentively)

Maitreya said :

32. Lord Śiva whose heart is full of compassion and who is fully devoted to Nārāyaṇa, spoke (the following words) to the Princes who were standing with folded palms before him.

33. "Victory to you, Oh Lord! Your victory is for the attainment of the blessedness of the Self, by the pre-eminent ones among those who have realized the Soul. May I too (thereby) attain to the state of blessedness! You eternally abide in the highest blissful nature. Hence I bow to you, Supreme Soul who is immanent in all.

34.* Salutation to the Lord who has a lotus (constituting the universe) springing up in his navel; who is the controller (lit. Soul) of the subtle elements (*tanmātras*) and the sense-organs; who is (the first and foremost *Vyūha* or manifestation of the Lord called) Vāsudeva,[122] (the presiding principle or the ruler of *citta*—Reason); who is absolutely tranquil, self-refulgent, the unchangeable Supreme Soul abiding in (and controlling) all beings.

35.** Obeisance to Saṅkarṣaṇa (the second *Vyūha*, the presiding deity of *ahaṁkāra* or ego) who is unmanifest, infinite, the destroyer of the universe (by fire emanating from his

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* VC : Oh Lord with a lotus in his navel; My physical body is born of Brahmā who was created from the lotus springing up from your navel. Make me inclined to your devotion. Oh Vāsudeva, the presiding deity of *citta* (mind), make my mind serene and tranquil. Fill it with your light and urge it on to your devotion.

122. *Vāsudevāya*—To the Principle that abides in all and yet is unsoiled by their defects.

** VR: (I) bow to Saṅkarṣaṇa who withdraws within himself the universe; Who consumes the world by fire blowing out of his mouth; who is too subtle to be distinguished by name and form but who is unmanifest and hence is himself unwithdrawable. Salute to Pradyumna (the 3rd *Vyūha*-Manifestation of the Lord), who enlightens the world by instruction in the *Śāstra* called *Vedas* which teach the means to all the Puruṣārthas (objectives in human life); who controls all the beings by abiding in them simultaneously.

mouth at the time of *Pralaya*—the dissolution of the universe); (I) bow to Pradyumna (the third *Vyūha*) who awakens the universe (to the highest knowledge),[123] and who presides over Buddhi (intelligence).

36.* I pay my respects again and again to (the fourth *Vyūha*) Aniruddha who is the ruler of the mind which controls the sense-organs (e.g. the eye, the ear etc.).[124] I bow to him (i.e. You) who as the Sun god[125] pervades the universe with his light[126] and who is unaffected by increase and decrease.[127]

37.** I bow to him who is the gateway to the heaven as well as to the Liberation (Mokṣa); who ever abides in pure hearts.[128] I pay obeisance to the Fire-god (whose energy is gold), who is the means of performing sacrificial activities (for which services of four sacrificial priests, viz., *Hotā*, *Adhvaryu*, *Udgātā* and *Brahmā* are essential) and who promotes the continuity of the (tradition of the) sacrifice.[129]

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123. *Viśva-prabodhāya*—Who is perfect in wisdom or who 'awakens' the universe—VJ.

124. *Hṛṣikeśendriyātmane*—Master of sense-organs and whatever belongs to Indra who presides over the mind and senses—VJ.

125. *paramahaṁsāya* : (i) One who destroys from himself as well from his devotees the impurities of Karmas whether merit or sin—VR.

(ii) One who completely removes the doubt of his devotees like Sanaka and others by imparting real knowledge to them—SD.

126. *pūrṇāya*—(i) Who pervades (everything) both internally and externally—VR.

(ii) Who assumed full-fledged incarnations like Nṛsiṁha, Rāma—SD.

127. *nibhṛtātmane*—One whose all desires are fulfilled or achieved —VR.

VR. records a v.l. —*nirvṛtātmane*—One who is unaffected by sorrow.

* VC. (2nd half) : Oh Lord, the Soul of the Sun-god! Direct my eyesight to the beauty of your (the Lord's) personality. May the inherent light of this Sun purify me. I bow to you. Cf. supra III 26.28.

** Just as you direct others to the path of *karma*, direct my power of speech for performing your *kīrtana* form of devotion.

128. *Śuciṣad*—(i) Hence is called *haṁsa*—ŚR.

cf. *Haṁsaḥ śuciṣad/Katha Up.* 5.2 also *Mahānārāyaṇa* 9.3; 17.8 and *Nṛsiṁha-Pūrva-Tāpinī Upa* 3.1, vide Jacob's UVK (*Upaniṣad Vākya Koṣa* p. 1067).

(ii) Who dwells in the pure hearts of Yogis—VR.

(iii) One who abides in the Fire—VJ.

129. *tantave*—(i) Who is of the form of or identical with *Yajña*—VR.

(ii) Who secures the continuity of the race, or All-pervading—VJ.

38.* Salutation to him who, as Soma is the food of manes (*pitṛs*) and gods, is the Lord of Three Vedas (viz. *Ṛg*, *Sāman* and *Yajus*), and is the semen (essence) of sacrifice. My obeisance to you who in the form of water, give satisfaction to all *jīvas*.

39.** I bow to him who is the body of all the Souls (*ātmans*) or living beings; who is in the form of the earth; who forms the Cosmic Body (Virāṭ); who, as the Vāyu—the deity of vital airs and wind—sustains the three worlds, and forms the power of the mind, senses and body.

40.*** I pay obeisance to him who as ether (through its attribute called Sound) serves as an index (to the existence)

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* (i) VR. : I bow to him who as an Inner Controller dispenses fruits of *karmas*; who as the food of Pitṛs and gods brings satisfaction to them; who is the protector of three Vedas and is the fruit (seed) of sacrifices; thus he reveals the means of attaining to heaven (*Svarga*—including worldly pleasures on the earth) and *Mokṣa*; who is the giver of pleasures to *jīvas* from the contact with objects of senses and all kinds of tastes.

(ii) VC: Oh Lord in the form of Soma, the food of *Pitṛs* and gods ! By repaying the debt (obligations) to gods, sages and *Pitṛs*, please fix up my heart in devotion (to you) and may the lustre of Soma purify me Oh Lord in the form of fluids! Please develop in me taste for your essential sweetness. May my tongue and humids in my body be purified. I pay obeisance to you.

(iii) GD : The Lord, in the form of *rasa* (fluids) is bowed to create proper ability in the tongue to taste the sweetness of divine grace.

** (i) VR : Salutations to him whom everything insentient and all sentient beings serve as a body; who is gross (*Virāṭ*) and of the form of Pṛthivī and its characteristic quality—fragrance.

(ii) VJ : Obeisance to him who abides in everyone as the Soul, thumb-like in stature; and who staying within the earth makes her most important.

(iii) VC : Oh Hari in the form of the Earth ! Direct my sense of smell to your divine fragrance and my body to your service. Oh Hari in the form of Vāyu ! Make my sense of touch appreciative of the tenderness of your person and make my body, senses and mind capable of worshipping you.

*** (i) VJ: Bow to him the correct means of knowing whom is *Śāstra* or *Veda*; or who is the cause or source of *Puruṣārtha* (the highest objective in human life); who is unattached like *ākāśa* (ether); who sanctifies all; who is light itself; who abides in all deities or who gives sacred regions like *Svarga* etc.

of all things and are the basis of the concept of differentiation between the internal and external. I bow to him who forms the regions of great refulgence (called *Svarga* etc. and which are attained by great meritorious acts).

41. I bow to you who are both *Pravṛtti karma* (acts pertaining to worldly activities or *saṁsāra*) leading to the region of manes (Pitṛs), and the *Nivṛtti karma* (the discontinuance of worldly acts) the means of attaining to the region of gods. (Bow to you) who are the god of Death, (which is) the fruit of unrighteousness which causes pain.

42. Salutations to you, Oh Lord! You are the source of all blessings. You are the Manu (or all-knower and the embodiment of *Mantras*). I bow to you in the form of Kṛṣṇa who is the highest righteousness incarnate and whose intelligence is unobstructed (anywhere); who is the ancient-most Puruṣa (person), the master of the path of knowledge (Sāṅkhya) and of Yoga.

43. You are the Lord Rudra who is the presiding deity of *ahaṁkāra* (ego) and who possesses the threefold potencies (of being the doer, the instrument and action). I bow to you (Oh Brahmā!) who are the embodiment of knowledge and action, and who are the source of (four kinds) speech (viz. *parā, paśyanti, madhyamā* and *vaikharī*). My obeisance to you.

44. Be pleased to bless us who are earnestly desirous of seeing you, with your vision which is highly adored and esteemed by the devotees of the venerable Lord (i.e. you). Please reveal to us your beautiful form which is so dearest to your votaries, and which, forming the objects of enjoyment of all senses simultaneously, delights them all (*or* which delights all senses by its numerous qualities).

45. Your form is lovely, bluish and resplendent like the rainy cloud. With its four long graceful arms and winsome face with beautiful and well-shaped features, it is as if a synthesis (lit. a treasure-house) of beauty in everything.

46. Your form has eyes (charming) like the inner petals of lotus, beautiful eyebrows and shapely nose, excellent rows

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(ii) VC. : In these verses one's own elements, senses and mind are made prone to the devotion of the Lord. After adoring Lord, the Lord is bowed to as having the form of the Vaikuṇṭha.

of teeth, attractive cheeks and mouth with symmetrical ears beautifying it.

47. With side-long looks as if smiling with love, your form is beautified with flowing locks of hair. It is clad in silken garments, (yellowish) like lotus-filaments, and is adorned with a pair of polished earrings.

48. It is also decorated with a brilliant crown, bracelets, wreaths of pearls, anklets and a girdle. It is extremely magnificent by its conch, discus, mace, lotus, garland of sylvan flowers and excellent jewels (of various kinds).

49. Its shoulders which resembled those of a lion, are shining with lustre of necklace, earrings (and other ornaments). Its neck appears beautiful with the refulgence of the *Kaustubha* gem. Its bosom on which rests permanently the goddess Śrī (in the form of *Śrīvatsa*) far outshines the (dark coloured) touchstone bearing a streak of gold on it.

50. Its belly is like the leaf of an *aśvattha* (Indian fig-tree) in shape, and appears beautiful with its threefold heaving due to his inhalation and exhalation of breath. Its navel is so deep like a whirlpool that it is as if withdrawing again the universe (to its source) through it.

51. On the dark-blue waist (of Your form) the (yellow) silken loin-cloth fastened with a girdle of gold, appears all the more resplendent (by contrast in colours). Your form is extremely handsome to look at due to (its pair of) symmetrical and beautiful feet, shanks, thighs and depressed knees.

52. You dispel the darkness (of ignorance) in our hearts by the rays of light emanating from the nails of your feet (toes) which are beautiful like the petals of autumnal lotus. Pray reveal to us your form, our asylum, which removes the fear (of your devotees). Oh Master! You are the preceptor to guide us who are groping in the dark.

53.* This form of yours should be constantly meditated upon by those who earnestly desire to purify their hearts. For

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* (i) VR. : Pray reveal unto us your form as an object of meditation (and not *sākṣātkāra*—perception). The Yoga of meditation leads to the Yoga of devotion.

(ii) VJ. : Self-purification means liberation from *saṁsāra*. For this mere performance of our righteous duties according to our *varṇa* (caste)

the path of devotion brings fearlessness (or final beatitude) unto those who perform their respective religious duties.

54. You are difficult to be attained by all embodied beings (who are not your devotees). You are sought after and respected by the ruler of heaven—*Svarga*. You are the goal of them who exclusively seek Self-realisation. You are accessible only to them who are full of devotion.

55. You are very difficult to be propitiated. Having propitiated you, with exclusive devotion which is difficult to be found even in the righteous people, who will covet for anything else than an asylum at your feet ?

56. Even though the god of death destroys the universe by the movement of his eyebrow—an index of his majestic power and energy—he does not wish (to exercise his authority on) him who has resorted to your feet as shelter.

57. I do not regard the heaven (*Svarga*) as well as final Beatitude (*Mokṣa*) as equivalent to companionship for the duration of half a moment with the devotees attached to the Lord. What of the blessings of mortals.

58. Now, let this be the favour conferred on us : May we be blest with the association of those who have washed away their sins internally by immersing their Souls in the (stream of the) glory of the Lord, and externally by bathing in the sacred waters of the Gaṅgā flowing from the Lord's holy feet which absolves one of all sins, and who are compassionate to all beings and have their minds free from passions like love, hate etc., and are endowed with virtues like straightforwardness.

59.* The contemplative sage whose mind is completely purified by being blest with the path of devotion (in associa-

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and *āśrama* (stage of life) is not enough. This observance of duties developing into and combining therewith intense devotion leads to Liberation.

(iii) VC.: Mere knowledge of *karmas* is not sufficient. *Bhakti-yoga* is absolutely necessary for those who observe their respective religious duties. A *Sādhaka* desirous of removing his *avidyā*, should meditate upon this form till a gets a vision of it.

* VC.: The mind is specially purified in the association of your devotees. Such pure mind enjoys the beauty of your sports (*līlā*). The ten defects or 'offences' against *bhakti* (devotion) or *nāma* (God's name) do not arise. The goddess of Bhakti confers her blessings and such a contemplative Soul visualizes God's sports in his pure heart

tion with such devotees of God) and is neither distracted by external objects nor lost in the dark cave of ignorance,[130] soon perceives your real nature easily and properly.

60.* You are that superbly effulgent *Brahman* in whom this universe is manifested and who appears shining in everything and who is all-pervading (and unaffected or unattached) like the sky.

61. Oh Lord! Your Māyā assumes various numerous forms. By this (Māyā) you create, sustain and again destroy the world as if it were real. But you remain changeless (all the while). Your Māyā creates the notion of difference (in others), but has no control or effect on you, the Supreme Soul. Hence we know you to be absolutely independent.

62. This form of yours is indicated as their controller by the *bhūtas* (five elements e.g. Earth, Water, Fire etc.), (conative and cognitive) sense-organs and the mind. Those (*karma*)—*yogins*[131] (the followers of the Path of Action), who devotedly worship this very form properly, by means of various ritualistic acts, for the attainment of *Siddhi* (final emancipation), are verily the past masters in Vedas and Āgama-Śāstra (Tantric-lore).

63. You are the only One, primeval Person with your potency (called Māyā) lying dormant. When it is activated through her, (the three *guṇas* viz.) *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* become differentiated (and combined). From it are evolved this universe (consisting of) (the principle of cosmic intelligence called) *Mahat*, *ahaṁkāra* (ego), (elements such as) the sky,

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130. VJ. reads differently : Whose mind enters the Soul who abides in cave of the heart.

*VJ: This verse points that Brahman (the support) and the universe are different; that his supreme effulgence shows that he is unaffected by ignorance or nescience and his comparison with the sky indicates his limitlessness.

131. *yoginaḥ*—(i) VR.: For Liberation (*Mokṣa*) the followers of the path of knowledge (*jñāna-yoga*) devoutly worship this form of the Lord, by performance of righteous duties specifically prescribed for their *varṇa* and *āśrama*. They do these properly and without any attachment or longing for the fruit of the action.

(ii) Followers of *Bhakti-yoga*—GD.

wind, fire, water and earth, as well as gods, sages, multitudes of living beings.

64* By a portion of yourself, you have entered the bodies of four types[132] which you have created by your (Māyā) power. It is, therefore, that they call him *Puruṣa* i.e. one who abides in the body. He is the *jīva* who through his senses enjoys the (drops of) honey (insignificant pleasures) collected by bees[132a]. (This shows his negligible nature.)

65. Though you are as described above, your real nature is inferrable (as its direct perception is not possible). (At the time of the dissolution of the world) you exhibit very terrific velocity sweeping off one element by another; You (ultimately) destroy the world just as a hurricane of irresistible force scatters away and sweeps off a multitude of clouds.

66. Just as an alert serpent, licking (its lips) with hunger, suddenly seizes a rat, you, as vigilant Death, suprisingly catch hold of a person who, absorbed in the anxiety of what to do and how to do, has become extremely negligent, is extremely addicted to sensual pleasure and has grown overgreedy.

67. What wise man who regards his life (lit. body) wasted by disregarding (i.e. not remembering) you, will give up your lotus-like feet—feet which my father Brahmā has been

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* VR. : The Lord is known as Puruṣa as he is the *antaryāmin* of *jīva* in whom he enters and controls.

VJ. : By a slight portion he enters the bodies of four kinds (e.g. viviparous, oviparous etc.) and through the senses of the *jīva* he enjoys only the essence of bliss. Hence as he abides in the body, he is known as Puruṣa.

VC.: The word *sāragha* indicates that the so-called pleasure is really pain (the sting of bees).

SD. : He who enjoys the insignificant pleasures of senses, the fruit of actions, is called *jīva* and is bound and he who abides in the body and is free, is the *Puruṣa*.

132. *caturvidham* : ŚR. enumerates them as follows :—(i) *jarāyuja* (viviparous); (ii) *aṇḍaja* (oviparous); (iii) *svedaja* (sweat-born); (iv) *udbhija* (germinating as a plant). According to VR. they are :—(1) gods; (2) men; (3) subhuman beings; (4) immovables.

132a. Cf. *dvā suparṇā sayujā sakhāyā*. . ...

tayor anyaḥ pippalaṁ svādvatti etc. —*Muṇḍ. Up.* 3.1.1.
Śvet. Up. 4.6.

adoring through fear (of bondage of *saṃsāra*) and which the fourteen Manus have been worshipping without arguments (with implicit belief).

68. Oh Brahman! Oh Supreme Soul! The whole universe is overwhelmed with the fear of Rudra (the destroyer of the universe). To us who are wise, you are our asylum completely free from fear.

69. Oh Princes! While you carry out your righteous duties with a pure heart and with your mind concentrated on the Lord, you repeat this (hymn). May God bless you!

70. (Please do) worship Hari, extolling and contemplating him again and again, as Hari is the Supreme Soul abiding in you as well as in all other beings.

71. Please commit to memory the hymn called *Yogādeśa* which you have received from me. Observing the vows of a sage's life and concentrating your minds, all of you study this reverentially.

72. With a desire to create the world, the venerable god Brahmā, the Lord of all the progenitors of the universe, formerly taught this (hymn) to us, his sons e.g. Bhṛgu and others who were intent on augmenting procreation.

73. When we, all the progenitors of creatures, were urged to create beings, we dispelled our ignorance by (repeating) this hymn and procreated various species of beings.

74. Hence, if a person who is devoted to Vāsudeva, repeats this hymn with faith and concentrated mind, he would before long obtain blissfulness.

75. Knowledge leading to the final beatitude is the highest of all blessings. It is by the boat of knowledge that one easily crosses the impassable sea of misery (i.e. *saṃsāra*).

76. He who with perfect devotion and concentration, studies this hymn in praise of the Lord sung by me, propitiates Lord Hari himself who is otherwise so very difficult to be pleased.

77. As the Lord is the sole receptacle of all blessings, a man with a steady mind who highly delights the Lord (by praising him) with this hymn sung by me, immediately gets whatever blessings he likes.

78. A man, who, rising up early at dawn, and with a heart full of devotion, hears this or recites this to others with folded palms, is released from the chains of *karmas*.

79. Oh princes! By repeating with concentrated mind this praise of the Highest Person, the Supreme Soul, sung by me, you do perform this great penance at the end of which you will obtain your desired object.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

*(*The Story of Purañjana—Introduction*)

Maitreya said :

1. Having thus instructed Pracetasas, the sons of Barhiṣad, Lord Śiva who was devoutly worshipped by them, immediately disappeared at that very spot, while the Princes were simply looking on.

2. Repeating the hymn in praise of the venerable Lord, as sung by Rudra, all the Pracetasa princes standing in water, practised penance for ten thousand years.

3. Oh Vidura ! In the meanwhile (while Pracetasas were undergoing austere penance) the compassionate Nārada who knew the reality about the Supreme Soul, (visited and) reasoned with (their father) Prācīnabarhis who was attached to and was preoccupied in ritualistic Vedic acts, (as follows) :

4. "Oh King ! What bliss do you attempt to secure by the performance of ritualistic acts? That which removes miseries and secures happiness is (called the real) bliss. And (according to the wise) such beatitude is not expected from the *karmas*."

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* The story of Purañjana is an allegory on *jīva* and Paramātman. (Cf. the allegorical reference to the *jīva* and *Śiva* as two birds occupying the same tree, one enjoying the fruits and the other staying aloof—*Muṇḍ. Up.* 3.1.1 and *Śvet. Up.* 4.6) The commentators explain the allegory at every step in details.

It is interesting to compare the interpretation of the allegory given by the commentators with that given by the author of the Bh. P. himself in chapter 29 (infra).

The King said :

5. "Oh blessed Sir ! My mind is distracted by the ritualistic *karmas*. I do not know the supreme bliss. Please initiate me in that pure knowledge whereby I can be free from (bonds of all) *karmas*.

6. In the householder's life which is characterised by deceitfulness, a person looks upon his sons, wife and wealth as the sole objectives in life. Such ignorant persons, wandering in the pathways of *saṁsāra* (transmigration of the Soul), never attain the Supreme Bliss.

*Nārada said** :

7. Oh Lord of men ! Have a look at those multitudes of living beings mercilessly slaughtered by you in thousands, as beasts (consecrated) for sacrifice.

8. Remembering your cruelty (to them), they are waiting for you. When you will be dead, they, with their ire aroused, will pierce you (through and through) with their steel-like horns.

9. On this point, I shall narrate to you this ancient legend. Listen to the story of Purañjana as I tell you.

10. Oh King, there was a king of wide fame, by name Purañjana (i.e. *Jīva*). He had a friend called Avijñāta (i.e. the Supreme Soul) as his activities were unknown.

11. The king wandered over the earth[133] in search of an abode.[134] When he did not find any suitable asylum, he became rather dejected.[135]

12. Seeking after pleasures, he did not approve of any of the cities that existed on the earth as suitable for the realization

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* By his Yogic powers Nārada showed to the King the huge multitudes of beasts slaughtered by him for sacrifice—ŚR.

133. *Pṛthivi*—This indicates the universe—ŚR., VR. *karma-bhumi*—VJ.

134. *Śaraṇam*—Body through which the *jīva* gets experience in life.

135. Although he (the *jīva*) gets sensual pleasures in all births, he is not satisfied as non-attachment, which is the means of the Liberation (*Mokṣa*) is not possible in non-human births. Hence his dejection—GD.

of those pleasures.[136]

13.* Once upon a time, he saw, on the table land in the southern range of the Himālayas, a city having nine gates and possessing all the characteristics of a good city.

14.** It was surrounded by ramparts, gardens, watch-towers, moats, windows, arched gateways. It was crowded on all sides with houses with crests of gold, silver and iron.

15. It appeared resplendent like Bhogavatī,[137] in beauty, with floors of its mansions studded with precious stones like sapphires, crystals, cat's eyes, pearls, emeralds and rubies.

16. It appeared beautiful with assembly halls, court-yards, main roads (highways), gambling houses, markets, resthouses, flags and fluttering banners and platforms built of coral.

17. Outside the city, there was a park full of celestial trees and creepers. There was a lake resounding with warbling sounds of birds and humming of bees.

18. The bank of the lotus pond was richly beautified with trees the foliage and branches of which were fluttering with the cool breeze laden with spray from the cascades and blowing over the flower beds.

19. It was safe and free from molestation as the multitudes of wild animals infesting it were observing ascetic vows (e. g. non-violence etc.). The traveller feels that he is invited there, by the cooing of the cuckoos.

20.*** In that garden, he (King Purañjana) saw a young

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136. There is no possibility of enjoying all the earthly and heavenly pleasures in non-human species. Hence his disapproval—ŚR. Cf. *tābhyo gām ānayat tā abruvan na vai no'yam alam* etc. *Ait. Up.* 2.2.

*In Bhāratavarṣa, to the south of the Himālayas, he saw the city (human body) which was free from disabilities and handicaps like blindness, deafness—ŚR.

**The limbs or sense-organs of the body are the ramparts etc. The plexuses (*cakras* like *ādhāra* etc.) are the houses. The three types of turrets or house-crests are the *guṇas* viz. *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*—ŚR.

137. *Bhogavatī* : Literally—a place for enjoyment of pleasures, but it is generally derived from *bhoga* 'serpent's body'. It is the name of the city of snakes in the lower-regions, famous for its beauty.

***The lady is the intelligence (*buddhi*) and the ten attendants are the conative and cognitive sense-organs and the hundred (i.e. hundreds of) activities or *vṛttis* of each are the wives.—ŚR.

damsel of superb beauty coming there by chance. She was accompanied by ten servants each of whom was the husband of hundred ladies.

21. She was guarded on all sides by her bodyguard, a serpent with five hoods.[138] She was sixteen years of age, beautiful or capable of assuming any form she liked. She was in search of a husband.

22. The girl had a shapely nose, beautiful rows of teeth, lovely cheeks, attractive face and was wearing lustrous earrings in her symmetrical ears.

23. She put on a reddish-brown garment round her waist with a girdle of gold around it. The dark-complexioned[139] lady with well formed hips walked with her feet making a tinkling sound with the adorning anklets.

24. Out of bashfulness, she was (now and then) covering with the end of her garments. her symmetrical, closely knit, round (spherical) breasts indicating the advent of youth. She was walking (in the stately gait) like an elephant.

25. Being (as if) wounded with the arrows of her charming side-long glances, shot from the bow of her eyebrows making lively amorous movements, the hero (Purañjana) spoke in soft winsome tones to the girl who looked all the more lovely by her bashful smiles.

26. "Who are you, Oh beautiful lady with eyes like the lotus-petals ? Whose (relative) are you ? Whence have you come here ? Oh timid lady, please tell me what you desire to do here on the outskirts of the city ?

27. Who are these ten attendants commanded by the formidable warrior, forming the eleventh ? Who are these beautiful damsels ? Who is the serpent who goes ahead of you, Oh lady with beautiful eyebrows ?

28. Are you the goddess Hrī, Pārvatī or Sarasvatī (the goddess of speech) or the goddess Lakṣmī leading the life of a sage in this secluded forest seeking a husband who must have surely got all his wishes fulfilled as your feet are desired

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138. This is *Prāṇa* of five vital functions—ŚR.

139. ŚR. quotes the following from the *Chānd. Up.* to explain the darkness of complexion : *annamayaṁ hi somya mana iti yat kṛṣṇam tad annasya /*

by him ?[140] If you be the goddess Lakṣmī, where has the lotus been dropped from your hand ?

29. Oh lady with beautiful thighs, you are surely none of these deities as you touch the earth (with your feet). You should, therefore, adorn this city along with me (who am) an excellent warrior of great exploits, just as goddess Lakṣmī as the consort of Lord Viṣṇu (the Lord of Sacrifices) graces Vaikuṇṭha (the highest region).

30. Please show favour to me, Oh graceful lady, as the mind-born god of love, prompted by you with the playful movement of your eyebrows and your bashful smile expressing love, is harassing me by piercing my heart with your side-glances.

31. Oh lady with bright smiles ! Please raise up and show me your sweet speaking face with beautiful eyebrows and eyes of bright, charming pupils—your face which is covered with locks of long dark-blue hair—as it is not turned to me through bashfulness."

Nārada said :

32. Oh warrior! The lady was infatuated with Purañjana, the hero[141] who was courting her so impatiently and (in response) greeted him with a smile

33. "Oh prominent man, we do not know properly who is your or my progenitor. No, do we know the family or the name (by which we are called?)

34. We know that we are here today, now. We do not know beyond that. Nor do we know who created this city which is my abode, Oh warrior.

35. Oh respectful one, these men and women, who are my friends, stay awake while I am asleep. So does this serpent guarding this city.

36. Leave aside the details about my name, family etc. Oh destroyer of enemies, I am glad that you have come.

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140. According to most commentators: But the alternate explanation "who must... wishes fulfilled as his feet are desired by you" is worth considering.

141. ŚR. presumably reads *vīkṣya* and interprets *dṛṣṭvā* (having seen).

God bless you! Whatever sensual pleasures you desire, I shall secure for you with the help of my kinsmen.

37. Please occupy this city of nine gates, enjoying for hundred years all the sense-pleasures which I shall secure for you, Oh Lord.

38. For, whom else than you should I really please—him who is ignorant of erotics or pleasure, void of learning or wisdom, careless about tomorrow's work (i.e. his life here) and heedless about his life hereafter, a sheer brute.

39. Here (in the life of a householder) one attains to *puruṣārthas* called *dharma* (righteousness), *artha* (wealth) and *kāma* (pleasures of the senses). It is here that one gets the joy of getting progeny, immortality (i.e. Liberation—*Mokṣa*), fame and regions which are free from sins, sorrow—which even recluses do not know.

40. They, the sages of old, say that in this world, the stage of householder's life is the only asylum for the well-being of manes (*pitṛs*), gods, sages, men and all other beings and of the householder himself.

41. Oh warrior, what girl in my position (lit. like me) would not accept as a husband a famous, munificent, good-looking, loving personage like you.

42. Oh mighty-armed hero! What woman's heart in this world would not cling to your arms which are (tender yet powerful) like the body of a serpent?—You move about in the world in order to remove the mental anguish of the helpless by your smiling looks full of compassion."

Nārada said :

43. Oh King (Prācīnabarhis)! In this way the couple entered into a mutual agreement there. They then entered the city and lived in happiness for a hundred years.

44. Sweetly eulogised by bards everywhere, and playing in company of women, he entered the (swimming-) pool in the hot season.

45. For (the convenience of) the movements from and to the outer regions, of whosoever (unknown) was the master of the city there were seven gateways in the upper (i.e. front-)

part of the city (viz. two eyes, two ears, two nostrils and a mouth) and two in the lower part (the anus and the penis).

46. There were five doors to the east (front, viz., two eyes, two nostrils and one mouth), one to the South (the right ear), one to the North (the left ear) and two to the west (viz. the penis and the anus). I shall describe to you the names of these, Oh King.

47.* To the East were constructed adjacently a pair of gates called *khadyotā* (fire-fly) and Āvirmukhī (of manifest face—bright light). Through them he (king Purañjana) accompanied by his friend Dyumat, used to visit the country called Vibhrājit.

48.** A pair of adjacent gates called Nalinī and Nālinī were also built to the east. Through them he (Purañjana) in company of Avadhūta, goes to the region called Saurabha (Fragrance).

49.*** The fifth gate to the east was called Mukhyā (the main). In association with Rasajña and Vipaṇa, the king of the city goes through the gate to the countries of Āpaṇa and Bahūdana.

50.† On King (Barhisad)! Through the southern gate of the city called Pitṛhū, Purañjana, in accompaniment of Śrutadhara used to go to the country called Southern Pañcāla.

51.†† By the northern gate of the city, known as *Devahū*, Purañjana along with Śrutadhara, used to go to the country called Northern Pañcāla.

52. To the west of the city was the gate called *Āsurī* (pertaining to *asuras*—people indulging in sensual pleasures). In company of Durmada, Purañjana used to go to the country called Grāmaka (low or vulgar pleasures).

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* Description of the eyes.

** Description of the nose.

*** Herein *Āpaṇa* signifies speech, and *Bahūdana* denotes variety of food. *Vipaṇa* thus stands for the organ of speech and *Rasajña*, for the capacity of the tongue to taste—ŚR.

† The right ear is the Southern gate leading to the region of Pitṛs by the path of ritualistic *karmas*. It hears the *karma-kāṇḍa*, the path of the *karmas*. Due to its association with *Pitṛ-yāṇa* the right ear is called *Pitṛhū*. *Pañcāla* here is the science of *Pravṛtti mārga*.

†† *Devahū* is the left ear. It leads to the region of gods by following the *Devayāna* Path.

53. There was another gate to the West. It was called *Nivṛti*. Through it Purañjana went to the country called *Vaiśasa* (terrible), in company of Lubdhaka (a miser).

54. Out of the citizens (there were) two viz. *Nirvāk* (speechless) and *Peśaskṛta* (possessing no aperture). With these the lord of senses made movements of walking and doing.

55. If he goes to his harem (viz. heart) along with (his friends) *Viṣūcīna* (the chief of attendant in a harem), he experiences delusion, calmness and (excitement of) joy, from wife and children.

56. The unwise king (Purañjana) who was thus deeply attached to *karmas* (action) and whose mind was completely given up to sensual pleasures, was enraptured and whatever the queen wished to do, he acted accordingly.

57. Sometimes when she used to drink wine, he used to drink and get intoxicated. Sometimes when she took meals, he took it with her ; when she chewed, he did the same.

58. Sometimes when she sang, he used to sing; sometimes he wept when she shed tears; sometimes he followed her while she laughed ; sometimes when she chattered, he prattled.

59. Sometimes when she ran, he ran; he stood when she stood. When she lay in bed, he did so; sometimes when she sat up, he also sat up.

60. Occasionally, when she heard, he heard; when she saw, he also saw it; sometimes she smelt, he also smelt; when she touched, he used to touch.

61. Sometimes when the wife cried in sorrow, he wept after her like a man in distress; when she rejoiced, he rejoiced; on her being delighted, he was delighted.

62. In this way, he was deceived by the queen and lost his original nature (such as non-attachment to everything). The ignorant King though unwilling, simply imitated (the acts of his queen) helplessly like a domesticated monkey kept for amusement.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

Purañjana's Hunting Expedition and His Queen's Wrath Pacified

Nārada said :

1-3.* One day, Purañjana, clad in the armour of gold and equipped with a mighty bow and an inexhaustible quiver (of arrows) and accompanied by his eleventh general, mounted his chariot fit for speedy marches. It was yoked with five horses; had a pair of shafts, two wheels, one axle, three flag-staffs, five cords, only one rein, one charioteer, one seat, two central poles to which yoke is fixed, five covered litters and sevenfold protection, capable of five kinds of movements and provided with instruments of gold. He set out for the forest called *Pañca Prastha* (Forest of five hills).

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*ŚR., VR. SD., GD., GS., BP. regard verses 1-10 as the description of Purañjana in the state of dream. Only VJ. thinks this as a state of wakefulness (*jāgrad-avasthā-praveśa*).

According to ŚR., the allegory becomes clear when we understand the following:

The chariot=His body in the dream.
Five horses=five cognitive senses.
Two shafts=The notions of I-ness and Mine-ness.
Two wheels=merits and sins.
One axle=Pradhāna (Primordial Nature).
Three flagstaffs=*Sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*.
Five cords=Five vital breaths (Prāṇa, apāna etc.).
One rein=the mind.
One charioteer=The intellect.
One seat=the heart.
Two poles=grief and delusion (*Śoka-mohau*)
Five recesses=Five objects of senses.
Seven-fold protection=Seven constituents of the body.
Five kinds of movements=Five conative organs.
Gold armour=*Rajoguṇa*.
The big bow=Attachment.
The inexhaustible quiver=Infinite tendencies associated with ego (*ahaṁkāra*).
One general=The Mind.
The Pañca-prastha forest=Five objects of the senses (e.g. sound, smell etc.)

VJ. explains differently (only differences are noted here):

While coming to the state of wakefulness, Purañjana entered the stage through the five senses for the purpose of possessing various objects.

4.* Being carried away by the passion for game, the proud king left behind his wife who did not deserve that treatment. Taking a bow and arrows, he started a-hunting there.

5. Taking to Asura (demonic) way of life, he became hard-hearted and merciless. He killed (all) the wild animals in the jungle with his sharp arrows.

6.** Even if a king is extremely fond (of hunting), it is restricted by the *śāstras*, that (it is only) on religious occasions like special *Śrāddhas* as specified in the *Śāstras* and not for routine *Śrāddhas* that theking may kill just the required number of sacrificial animals in the jungle (and not more).

7.*** Oh Chief of Kings! A learned person who does his acts as prescribed by the *Śāstras* is not thereby affected due to the knowledge arising from the performance of that act.

8. Otherwise a person who does acts (in violation of the restrictions of Śāstras), becomes full of egotism and falls in the stream of *guṇas* (i.e. *saṁsāra*). Losing his faculty of discrimination and judgment, he goes down[141a] (to lower grades of existence).

9. In the forest, there took place destruction of the afflicted animals whose bodies were shattered by arrows with variegated feathers—a sight unbearable to those whose hearts were full of compassion.

10.† After hunting down hares, hogs, buffaloes, bisons, deer, porcupines and many other (animals) irrespective of their fitness for being offered for sacrifice, he got exhausted.

His bow is the sacred syllable OM. The inexhaustible quivers are *Pravṛtti* and *Nivṛtti*. Purañjana is the leader of the army of eleven (10 sense-organs, mind). One axle is the Vāyu—the common 'thread' or force impelling all activities. Five recesses or knots are the *nāḍīs* or 'tubes' through which five vital breaths (*prāṇas*) circulate through the body.

*Purañjana ignored his reasoning faculty altogether and with a mad attachment to sensual pleasures, indulged in them indiscriminately—ŚR.

**The allegory being thus clear, its application to each and every verse is not given here as it is unnecessary. Commentators, however, emphasize the inner meaning minutely rather than the story element.

***These show how one should do one's duties without being bound down by their effects and how an ignorant person impelled by passions gets involved in *saṁsāra*.

141a. *adho*—to hell—VR., GD.

† The hunted animals are the permitted and prohibited pleasures enjoyed by the *jīva*.

11.* Then being exhausted with hunger and thirst, he retired from hunting and returned to his palace. Having taken bath and proper (sumptuous) meal, he lay on bed and was relieved of fatigue.

12.** He got himself beautified with scents, cosmetics, flower garlands etc. Having got his person well adorned, he set his heart on the queen (his intelligence of *sāttvic* type).

13.*** In his youthful pride, the King who was satisfied and in a gay mood, got his mind overcome with the passion of love, he missed his (charming) wife who helped him discharging his duties as a householder.

14. Oh King Prācīnabarhis ! Being rather frustrated, he asked the ladies in the harem, "Oh beautiful ladies, are all of you and your mistress, the queen, well as before ?

15. The splendour and wealth of the house do not appear as brilliant as before (because) if the house is bereft of the mother or the wife who treats her husband as a god, it is like a broken chariot (without wheels etc.). What wise man will stay in it, like a miserable wretch ?

16. Where is that charming lady who, at every step, illuminated my intelligence and lifted me up (by cheering me), while I was being drowned in the sea of miseries ?"

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*According to ŚR., VR. and others, after describing the state of dream in verses 1-10, the author describes the happy life of a man with *sāttvikī buddhi* to the end of the chapter.

VJ. regards the remaining chapter as the description of the state of sleep thus: Being thoroughly tired of gross and violent mental activities, he retired from the state of wakefulness to his asylum viz. *hṛdaya-nāḍī*. Removing the dust of enjoyments in the stage of wakefulness and eaten his meals (his own blissful nature), the *jīva* sleeps fully relieved of fatigue.

**VJ. : This describes the preparation before going to sleep. Materials of decoration are for the worship of the Lord (the *antaryāmin*) to whose presence the *jīva* goes in deep sleep. His thought of the queen is the change from deep sleep to the dream-state.

***When the *jīva* is under the influence of *rājasī buddhi*, he will not find this *sāttvikī buddhi*—ŚR.

(ii) In the dream-state the *jīva* does not find the conclusive understanding about Hari (*niścaya-jñānaṁ no'paiti*)—VJ.

The ladies replied :

17. "Oh King (Lord of men), we do not know what your beloved intends to do. You see (for yourself) that she is lying on the bare ground, Oh destroyer of enemies."

Nārada said :

18. Purañjana who had lost all his knowledge (power of discretion and judgment) through his fondness for his wife, became highly agitated and distressed to see her lying stretched (that way) on the ground.

19. With an aching heart, he tried to soothe her with soft, pleasing words. But he did not get any indication (in her behaviour) that it was a feigned anger of his beloved queen towards him (due to love).

20. Being expert in the art of conciliation, the hero gradually cajolled her, touched her feet and seating her on his lap he caressed her.

Purañjana said :

21. Really unfortunate are those servants on whom, though they have committed an offence, their masters do not inflict any corrective punishment, thinking that they (servants) are after all under their control, Oh beautiful damsel.

22. Punishment is a supreme grace shown by the master to his servants. Oh slim lady, it is only an intolerant fool who does not understand this as a friendly act.

23. Oh high-Souled lady with beautiful teeth and charming eyebrows ! Please show to us who are your own, your face with prominently shapely nose and soft, sweet accented speech—face bright with smiling looks, bent down with the weight of love and bashfulness, adorned with bee-like dark locks of hair.

24. Oh queen of a warrior (like me) ! I shall instantly inflict punishment on him who has committed any offence against you unless he be an earth-god (*Brāhmaṇa*) or a devotee of Lord Viṣṇu. Verily I shall see to it that he is not free from fear, much less joyous either in the three worlds or (even) beyond (wherever he may go, he shall die out of fear from me).

25. Never have I seen (before) your face without its *tilaka* mark (on the forehead) or your countenance so dull,

cheerless, terrific with anger, unwashed and gloomy. Nor have I ever noticed your lovely breasts soiled with (tears of) grief and your lips red like *Bimba*-fruit, bereft of their saffron-colour.

26. Therefore be gracious unto me, who, being mad with the passion for hunting, have committed the offence of going out to hunt as per dictates of his whim (without taking your permission). What woman wishing to have a union would not accept for the proper duties her lover who has always been under her control and who has lost his patience by the vehemence of passion of love.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN*

(*Invasion of Caṇḍavega—The Episode of Kālakanyā*)

Nārada said :

1. In this way, bringing Purañjana under her complete control by her womanly charms, Purañjanī (the queen of Purañjana) enjoyed her life, giving delight to her husband, Oh great king.

2. When the queen who took her full bath and beautified herself with auspicious decorations, approached the king fully satisfied and with bright countenance, he hailed her with joy, Oh king (Prācīnabarhis).

3. Embraced by her, he threw his arms about her neck. He lost his reasoning capacity by the amorous sweet words of the queen in privacy. As he was thus possessed by the young lady day and night, he did not grasp the inexorably rapid course of time.

4. The magnanimous prince, being overwhelmed with lustful passion, lay on a very costly couch with the queen's arm as a pillow. He regarded her as the supreme objective in life (puruṣārtha) and he did not think of his real transcendental self[142] (or Brahman) as he was overpowered with *Tamas* (ignorance).

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*This chapter describes the general course of *saṁsāra* with Purañjana as the representative *jīva*.

142. Or alternatively he did not know what was his and what was another's.

5. Oh king of kings ! While he was enjoying pleasures thus with his mind clouded with passion, his youth passed away as if it were half a minute.

6.* The emperor Purañjana begot through (empress) Purañjanī eleven hundred sons. But he lost half of his life then.

7. Oh Lord of creatures ! He (also) begot eleven hundred and ten daughters called Paurañjanīs. They brought glory to their parents and were endowed with qualities like good character and generosity.

8.** That king of Pañcālas (Purañjana) got his sons, (all) capable of continuing the race of their forefathers, married to suitable brides and his daughters to proper bridegrooms.

9. And his son had each a hundred sons who have verily propagated the race of Purañjana in the Pañcāla country.

10. By the formation of a strong attachment (lit. sense of mineness) to (sons and grandsons), the shareholders in his property, house treasures and dependants (e.g. ministers, servants), he became firmly attached to the sense-objects.

11. Being prompted by various desires he became consecrated for sacrifices and worshipped gods, manes (*pitṛs*), Lord of the goblins with sacrifices terrible on account of slaughter of beasts, as your honour has done.

12. In this way, he remained remiss about his duties (spiritually) beneficial to him, and had his mind strongly attached to his family. Verily there came the period of life (old age) which is repellent to persons addicted to women.

13. Oh King Prācīnabarhis ! There was a King of Gandharvas, known as Caṇḍavegà (signifying the complete year). The powerful king had a force of three hundred sixty Gandharvas (Gandharvas standing for days).

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*Here 'eleven' signifies the ten sense organs and the mind. 'Hundreds' means innumerable activities of senses.

Daughters are the mental activities.

**Jīva, the Lord of five senses, married his sons i.e. sense-activities to suitable brides, i.e. thoughts about what is beneficial or otherwise. His daughters i.e. mental activities were associated with virtues like modesty or proper objectives of pleasure.

14. Paired to(i.e.wedded to)them were similar (equal number of) Gandharva women (i.e. nights) some dark, some fair or white (according to the fortnights). By their rotational raids, they plundered the city furnished with all desired objects, since its creation.

15. When those attendants of Caṇḍavega began to plunder the city of Purañjana, Prajāgara, the serpent-guard resisted them there.

16. That powerful presiding deity of the city of Purañjana, single-handedly fought with seven hundred and twenty Gandharvas (male and female) for one hundred years (which is the duration of man's life).

17. When his relative—the guardian-serpent—began to lose strength by his single-handed fight with many, Purañjana, along with kingdom, capital and relations felt very much distressed with great anxiety.

18. In the capital city of Pañcāla he indulged in drinking and was under the thumb of women. While he used to receive taxes collected by his retainers, he was not aware of the danger.

19. Oh king Barhiṣad(Prācīnabarhis)! There was a certain daughter of Kāla[143] (the Time-spirit) who, being desirous of having a husband, toured over the three worlds. But nobody welcomed her.

20. Due to her misfortune she was well-known over the world as Durbhagā (the unfortunate). She was (once) sought after by the royal-sage, Puru, to whom she gave a boon.[144]

21. One day while she was wandering, she met me when I descended from Brahmā's region (*satyaloka*) to the earth. Being infatuated with passion, she sought me even though she knew that I had taken a vow of lifelong celibacy.

22. Getting enraged (at my refusal), she gave me an extremely unbearable curse ; 'Oh Sage, as you have set your

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143. *Kālakanyā*=Old age.

144. This refers to Puru's acceptance of the old-age of his father Yayāti to himself in exchange of his youth. Yayāti returned his youth to his son and made him the sovereign king after him.

face against my importunity, you will never stay at one place.'

23. The girl whose desire was so frustrated then followed my advice and approached the king of Yavanas,[145] by name Bhaya (Fear or Death), and courted him as a husband.

24. "Oh brave warrior ! I woo you, the leader of the Yavanas, as my coveted husband. The hope entertained by the creatures in you is never falsified.[146]

25. Good people feel regret for those two (types of) foolish and perverse natured people who neither give nor accept what is offered without any request and which is worth giving or receiving according to custom or Vedic precept.

26. Therefore, Oh good Sir, accept me who am offering myself to you. Please be gracious to me. It is the bounden duty of man to be compassionate with the afflicted."

27. Having heard the speech uttered by Kāla-kanyā (the daughter of Kāla), the lord of Yavanas, who desired to carry out the secret work of gods (viz., to bring about the death of living beings)[147] spoke to her with a smile.

28. "With the help of my Yogic vision born of my power of meditation, I have foreseen and selected a husband for you (even if) this world does not welcome you as you are both disagreeable (undesirable) and inauspicious.

29. Adopting unmanifest and imperceptible way of movement, you enjoy (each and every being in) the world created by *karma*. You go in company of my army (of diseases and anxieties) and you will bring about the destruction of all living beings.

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145. Yavanas signify physical pains and mental anguish.

146. VC. takes *bhakta* as 'the devotee of god' and interprets :

'The purpose of the devotees of the Lord is never frustrated'. Nārada intended that the 'Fear' (*Bhaya*) should grow old and weak by the marriage of Kāla-kanyā with him. His purpose should be achieved by my marrying you.

(ii) As *Bhaya* means *Kāla* (Death or Time) VD. adopts the second meaning 'Time' and explains: "A plan or determination made at the opportune (auspicious) time always bears fruit. I court you as you are the giver of fruit (success in undertaking) to all."

147. Death is kept secret by gods, lest people should renunciate the world.—SR.

30. This Prajvāra (Fatal fever created by Viṣṇu) is my brother. You be my sister. Accompanied by both of you and my formidable soldiers (physical and mental ailments) I shall range this world imperceptibly."

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

(Purañjana's Rebirth as a Woman and Attainment of Liberation)

Nārada said :

1. Oh King Barhiṣman (Prācīnabarhis)! Those soldiers of king Bhaya (i.e. diseases) who were the agents of fate, roamed over this earth accompanied by Prajvāra and the daughter of Kāla.

2. And all of a sudden, they swooped on the city of Purañjana on the D-day (on a certain day) and besieged the city, rich in earthly enjoyments, and guarded by the old serpent (i.e. the Prāṇa in old age whose physical activities became sluggish).

3. The daughter of Kāla also enjoyed perforce the city of Purañjana. Whatever man was overpowered by her, would at once become powerless.

4. The Yavanas (i.e. diseases) entered the city through all the gates from all directions and excessively ravished it, while it was being enjoyed by her (the body of the *jīva* is battered by repeated attacks of various diseases).

5. The city being (thus) devastated, Purañjana who identified himself with it as his own Self, and whose mind was troubled by his sense of mine-ness for his family (viz. intelligence, the mind, sense-organs etc.) underwent agonies of various kinds.

6. Clasped in the arms of the daughter of Kāla, bereft of his splendour and affluence, the wretched Purañjana whose mind was engrossed in sense-pleasure, lost his power of judgment and was forcibly deprived of his powers (viz. of making physical movements) by Gandharvas and Yavanas.

7. He saw that his capital city was completely razed and found that his sons, grandsons, attendants and ministers were antagonistic and disrespectful to him and his wife had lost love for him.

8. He found that he was in the clutches of the daughter (of Kāla) and that the Pañcālas were infested with enemies. He was lost in boundless anxiety and could not find any remedy against it.

9. The miserable king still hankered after the pleasures which were made stale (due to dyspepsia etc.) by the daughter of Kāla. He lost his affection for his son etc. here and his spiritual position hereafter, and continued in fondling his wife and sons.

10. Very reluctantly did the king proceed to abandon the city which was over-run by Gandharvas and Yavanas and was ravaged by the daughter of Kāla.

11. (At that time) there arrived Prajvāra (i.e. the high fatal fever) the elder brother of Bhaya (the chief of Yavanas). With a desire to render service to his brother, Prajvāra burnt down the entire city. (This indicates high temperature of the body).

12. When the city was aflame, the head of the family (Purañjana) along with his wife, children, dependents and citizens was greatly tormented.

13. When the city was occupied by the daughter of Kāla and his own home was surrounded by Yavanas, the guard of the city was greatly distressed when he was attacked by Prajvāra. (When the aged man is about to die, his body is in grip of diseases and the jīva is tormented every moment.)

14. When the serpent Prajāgara was not able to defend the city any longer there, he was violently trembling with severe agonies and he wished to escape from it (like a serpent) from the hollow of a tree ablaze with fire.

15. Oh King! When his limbs became weak and disabled and his prowess was thwarted by Gandharvas and he was surrounded by the inimical Yavanas, he verily wept bitterly.

16-17. The householder (Purañjana) entertained a false notion about his house etc. When the time of separation from his wife arrived, he became very miserable. Possessed with

egotism and a false sense of mine-ness about his daughters, sons, grandsons, daughters-in-law, sons-in-law, attendants and whatever (little) remained of his house, treasures and belongings, he thought:

18. "When I have departed to the next world, how will this mistress of the family, being bereaved of her lord and lamenting for the children, carry on her life?

19. She is so devoted to me that she does not eat food until I have taken mine; nor does she take her bath till I have bathed. She gets terribly afraid, when I am angry; when reproached by me, she keeps quiet through fear.

20 When I become thoughtless, she brings me round (lit. wakens me) to the proper path. When I proceed on a long journey, she becomes emaciated through grief. True, she is the mother of heroic children. But how will she desire to carry on the householder's life (without me)—she will certainly die.

21. How can my miserable sons or supportless daughters possibly live when I am gone, as they are like unto passengers on a boat broken in the midst of the sea."

22. While he was thus lamenting like a mean-minded fellow which was unbecoming to him (as he was really the Brahman himself, the Yavana king called Bhaya with a determination to capture him, drew near him.

23.* When he was being dragged like a beast to his (destined) place by the Yavanas, his followers being extremely grieved, over-anxious and afflicted ran after him.

24. When the serpent which was blocked (by the Yavanas) escaped from the city to join (his master Purañjana) the city was completely razed and reduced to its elements.

25. Though Purañjana was forcibly dragged by the powerful Yavana, he was so much overpowered with *tamas* (ignorance) that he did not remember (Avijñāta) who was his former well-wisher and companion.

26. The sacrificial beasts which were ruthlessly slaugh-

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* When the *jīva* is being taken to his next birth predetermined by his *karmas*, his subtle-senses etc. follow him—ŚR., VR.

Cf. *tam ut-krāmantam prāṇo nūtkrāmati prāṇam anūtkrāmantaṁ sarve prāṇā anūtkrāmanti—Bṛhad. Up.* 4.4.2.

tered by him, remembered his cruelty and getting enraged cut him down with axes (or axe-like sharp horns).

27. He sank in bottomless darkness (hell). He lost his memory. Due to his sinful contacts with women, he suffered unbounded afflictions for eternal years.

28.* As he brooded over that very (virtuous) wife at the time of death, he was born later as a most beautiful damsel, the princess of (the pious king) Rājasiṃha of Vidarbha.

29.** The Pāṇḍya king, Malayadhvaja, the conqueror of the cities of enemies, vanquished other kings in the battle and married the princess of Vidarbha who was offered as prize for bravery.

30.*** He begot from her one daughter of dark-blue eyes, and seven sons younger to her who became the kings of Draviḍa countries.

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* ŚR. and VR. explain that brooding over a woman at the time of death results in birth as a woman. Purañjana thought of his virtuous wife at the time of his death and due to his good merits he was born in the pious family of Rājasiṁha of Vidarbha and got married to Malayadhvaja, a devotee of Viṣṇu. Both explain the pun on *Vidarbha*.

This allegory is explained differently by different commentators :

** (i) Purañjana was thus associated with a great devotee of Viṣṇu. For Malayadhvaja signifies an eminent votary in the southern country—Malaya—famous for Vaiṣṇavism. Pāṇḍya means one who deserves Paṇḍā—intellect capable of deciding the truth.—ŚR., VR.

(ii) Malaya-dhvaja—one whose mind has attained serenity etc. by service of Hari. By means of *yama, niyama* he defeated and subdued his passionate senses (the inimical kings). He is Pāṇḍya—one endowed with discriminatory intelligence. *Para-purañjaya*—conquerors of *viṣayas* or objects of senses. *Vaidarbhī*—keen intellect. Purañjana and Purañjanī brooded over each other at the time of their death and were born as Pramadottamā and Malayadhvaja—VJ.

(iii) SD. : *Malayadhvaja*—famous in Bhāratavarṣa.

Para-Purañjayaḥ—One who conquers, i.e. attains to Vaikuṇṭha.

Vīrya-paṇām—One available by good merits.

Jīva who was infatuated with *Buddhi* (Intelligence) changed one body after another, once upon a time finds a spiritual preceptor leading to *Mokṣa* (Liberation).

*** Allegory explained :

(i) ŚR., VR., GD. : *Ātmajā*—Liking for the service of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Draviḍa-bhūmi : The Draviḍa country is protected by devotion of the type of Śravaṇa etc.

31. Oh King, each one of them had hundred million sons, whose descendants will enjoy this earth for one Manvantara and more.

32. Agastya married the first-born daughter who was constant in observance of vows.[148] Through her was born Dṛḍhacyuta who had sage Idhmavāha as his son.

33. The royal sage Malayadhvaja distributed the land, among his sons. With a desire to propitiate Lord Kṛṣṇa he retired to the Kulācala mountain, viz., Malaya.

34. The Princess of Vidarbha with bewitching eyes abandoned her palaces, sons and pleasures and ran after the Pāṇḍya king (Malayadhvaja) like the moonlight following the Moon.

35. There flow three rivers viz., Candravasā, Tāmraparṇī and Vaṭodakā in that region. Every day he washed off both his internal (mental) and external (bodily) impurities with the holy waters of the rivers.

36. He performed austere penance by subsisting on bulbous roots, seeds, roots, fruits, flowers, leaves, blades of grass and water. (Thereby) his body got gradually emaciated.

37. He conquered the pairs of opposites like cold and heat, wind and rain, hunger and thirst, agreeable and disagree-

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In association with devotees of Viṣṇu, a desire to serve him is created and it is followed with seven kinds of *bhakti* or devotion viz. *Śravaṇa* (study of scriptures), *Kīrtana* (singing Lord's praise), *Smaraṇa* (remembering him—his name), *Pādasevana* (serving his feet) *arcana* (worshipping him), *vandana* (laying oneself prostrate before him). The Draviḍa country is famous for votaries of Viṣṇu.

(ii) VJ. names the seven sons as follows : *Virāga* (renunciation), *Vinaya* (discipline), *Dāna* (charity), *Dhairya* (courage), *Aspardhana* (non-jealousy), *Viveka* (discrimination), *Dama* (self control.

148. Different interpretations of the allegory :

Agastya : (i) The mind (ŚR., VC., GD., SD.) (ii) One desirous of *Mokṣa* VR. (iii) A devotee of Viṣṇu (VJ.).

Dṛḍhacyuta : (i) Devoid of any desire for even hereafter such as *Satyaloka*—ŚR.

(ii) Who has absolutely no attachment for sons etc. (VJ).

(iii) One not attached to any pleasure here and hereafter—VC,. SD., GD.

Idhmavāha : (i) Desire to worship the feet of the spiritual preceptor for initiation and obtaining the Lord's grace–ŚR., VR.

(ii) Desire to be a pupil of a spiritual preceptor—VJ.

able, pleasure and pain, viewing them with equanimity of mind.

38. He burnt down his passions by austerities and knowledge. He conquered his senses, breath (*Prāṇa*) and mind by observing religious vows and rules of self-discipline called *Yama* and *Niyama*. He reflected over the identity of his Soul with Brahman (lit. He united his Soul with Brahman).

39. He sat motionless like a post at one and the same spot for a period of a hundred celestial years. As he bore intense love and devotion to Lord Vāsudeva, he ceased to be conscious of anything else (even of his body).

40.* He realised within himself, the Self as pervading (and illumining) his own body and mental activities and being distinct and different from them. Just as in a dream, one is witness to (and is therefore different from) mental activities (for example the scene of oneself being beheaded in the dream). And hence he verily ceased to participate (in any activities).

41-42.** Oh King! By the light of pure knowledge which radiates its light in all directions—knowledge which was imparted to him by venerable Hari as his preceptor—he realized himself as within (i.e. identical with) the Supreme Brahman

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* (i) Malayadhvaja realized Paramātman, the Seer, to be different due to his pervasiveness and his body as ephemeral as a dream and devoted himself solely to Paramātman—VR.

(ii) He reasoned with himself and realized the Supreme Soul as present within his own Self and as all pervasive yet distinct from everything else. Thus renouncing *saṁsāra* he became liberated while alive (*jīvan: muktyavasthām āpa*)—VJ.

(iii) Due to *smaraṇa-bhakti* (constant remembrance of God) he felt deep love for the Lord. And he realized him to be shining everywhere in all directions. But feeling him to be distinct and different from himself, he was overcome with the intense feeling of separateness and was fainted in a swoon—VC.

(iv) He realized his Self as knower and his body etc. as transient. He became unattached to everything else except his Self.

**(i) In his religious meditation (*upāsanā*) he realised that his individual Soul (*antaryāmin*) to be identical with the Supreme Brahman. He continued his *upāsanā* to the end of his life.—VR.

(ii) He set aside the false view about the identity of *jīva* and Paramātman—VJ.

and the Supreme Brahman within himself that way. Ultimately he lost this consciousness (of identity) and (like a fire, fuel of which is burnt down) he automatically ceased to belong to *saṁsāra* (i.e. became liberated).

43. Oh King! At that time the Princess of Vidarbha (Malayadhvaja's queen) who looked upon her husband as a god, renounced all pleasures and affectionately waited upon her husband Malayadhvaja, the knower of the highest form of religion.

44. Clad in dark garments, emaciated by observance of vows and with her hair on the head matted, she appeared in the company of her husband like a smokeless flame near flameless fire (of live charcoals).

45. Not being aware of the expiry of her beloved-most husband who was firm in his sitting posture (even after death), the lady approached him and waited upon him as before.

46. When, while serving the fect of her husband she did not feel any warmth, therein she got terrified in her heart like a doe which has strayed away from her herd.

47. Finding herself miserable and friendless, she was overcome with grief and lamented (her fate). Bathing her breasts in tears, she wept loudly in the jungle.

48. "Arise, Oh royal sage, arise. You should protect the earth engirdled with seas, as she is afraid of robbers and apostate and wicked Kṣatriyas"

49. Lamenting thus loudly, the lady who followed her husband to the forest, fell at his feet wailing and shedding profuse tears.

50. She piled up a funeral pyre of fuel. Placing her husband's body on it, she set it on fire. Weeping (all the while) she determined to follow him in death (by burning herself along with his body).

(iii) He realised that the whole—the Supreme Brahman, comprised of the part (the individual Soul) and vice versa. He (thereby) gave up thoughts about *Saṁsāra* and became liberated —SD.

(iv) Oh ! How wonderful is the power of *Bhakti* as *Mukti* (Liberation) is dependent on *Bhakti*—GD.

51. (At that time) there appeared an old friend of hers, a Brāhmaṇa who had mastered his Self. Soothing the lady with sweet consoling words, he spoke to the weeping lady (as follows) :

The Brāhmaṇa said :

52. Who are you? Whose (daughter) are you? Who is this man lying down for whom you are weeping? Don't you recognize me as your friend with whom you used to roam about formerly (before the creation of the universe) ?

53. Friend! (Even if you do not recognize me) do you remember yourself as having a friend called Avijñāta and that you being given to earthly pleasures, left me in search of some place.

54.* Oh noble Sir ! You and I were swans, friends, living in the Mānasa lake. For a period of one thousand years (while the great deluge lasted), both of us were without any abode.

55. Oh brother ? You whose original nature was that, left me and with your heart set on carnal pleasures, you went down to the earth. While roaming there, you saw a place built by a certain woman (Māyā).

56. It was provided with five gardens, nine gates, one guard, three surrounding walls, six families (of merchants), five market places. It was constructed with five materials, and was ruled by a woman.

57. The gardens are the objects of senses; the nine gates are the openings (viz. two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, one mouth, the penis and anus) for Prāṇa (who alone works as a

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*(i) *Haṁsa* means one who has annihilated all agitations or emotions (*hinasti nirasyati vikārān iti haṁsaḥ*). They are by nature deathless and untouched by pleasures of senses. Enjoyment of pleasure to *jīva* is due to *upādhi* (conditioning) —VR.

(ii) Oh learned one ! Both of us are *haṁsas* which are by nature free from all impurities. Our abode is the Mānasa lake (i.e. knowledge). We have lived together for thousands of years. The memory of previous birth is aroused as a result of the accumulated merits. —VJ.

(iii) *mānasam* etc. : Our abode was the heart in the subtle body (*sūkṣmaśarīragataṁ hṛdayam*) —SD.

guard). Fire, water and food are the surrounding walls, and the group of five sense organs and the mind are the families (of merchants).

58. The market places were the five conative organs; the five elements constituted the imperishable materials and the power i.e. Intelligence was the ruler. Under her dominance the man who enters this abode loses his Self consciousness in deep sleep.

59. Being overcome with (the charms of) the woman there, you enjoyed yourself in her company and forgot the memory of the previously known fact (your original status of being the Brahman). It is due to your association with her that you have been reduced to this wretched condition, Oh Lord.

60. You are not the daughter of the king of Vidarbha. Nor is this warrior your friend. Nor are you the husband of Purāñjanī by whom you were interned in the city of nine gates.

61. It is really the illusion created by me that you regard the man (Purañjana in the previous birth) as the virtuous woman—(Vaidarbhī in this birth). You are neither. We are *haṁsas* (pure spirits). Please see (realize) our real nature (course).

62. I am identical with you. You are not other than me. Please note that you and I are one. Wise men never see even the slightest difference or distinction between us.

63. Just as a man finds his one Self as divided in two in (his reflection in) the mirror and in the pupils of eyes, similar is the difference between us two.

64. In this way, the *haṁsa* (swan) from the Mānasa lake i.e. *Jīva* who was awakened (was made to realize his original state) by his fellow swan, became established in his own real nature. He regained the memory of his original nature which was lost due to his separation from him.

65. Oh Barhiṣman! This knowledge about the Self has been explained to you in an indirect manner; for the venerable Lord, the creator of the universe, likes to remain beyond the ken of senses.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

(The Purañjana allegory explained)

Prācīna-barhis said :

1. Oh divine sage ! (The implication of) your speech is not clearly understood by us. Sages (with spiritual knowledge may) grasp it (correctly) but not we who are deluded by ritualistic *karmas*.

Nārada explained :

2. One should understand Purañjana (creator of the city) as the embodied Soul (or *jīva*); for it is he (*jīva*) who builds his own city, i.e., body, having one, two, three, four or many feet or no foot at all.

3. The friend of *Puruṣa* (*Jīva*) who is called *Avijñāta* (the Unknown) is *Īśvara* (Himself), for he is not known by men as being endowed with names, actions or attributes.

4. When the *Jīva* desired to enjoy all the attributes of the *Prakṛti* (i.e. material objects of pleasure) in their entirety, he thought that (out of those bodies) the human body, provided as it was with nine entrances, two hands and two feet, as the most suitable one.

5. One should understand the young damsel Purañjanī as the intellect (*Buddhi*) which creates the notion of I-ness and mine-ness. It is by presiding over (i.e. identifying himself with) *Buddhi* that the *Jīva* in this body enjoys sense objects by means of sense-organs.

6. The male companions (of Purañjanī) are the group of (ten) conative and cognitive sense-organs which bring about knowledge and action. (Her) female friends are the activities of the senses. The (five-hooded) serpent is the *Prāṇa* (vital breath) with its five-fold activities.

7. One should understand *Bṛhadbala* (the eleventh powerful hero attending upon Purañjanī) as the Mind, the leader (and controller) of both kinds of senses and that the *Pāñcālas* are the five sense-objects, in the midst of which is situated the city of nine gates.

8. Two eyes, two nostrils, two ears, the penis and the anus are the four pairs of adjacent gates, with the mouth (as

the nineth). Out of these *Prāṇa* goes out (to the particular sense object) in association with (the faculties of that) particular sense-organ.

9. The pairs of eyes, nostrils and the mouth are the five gates in the east (i.e. the front of the head). The right ear is regarded as the south gate and the left ear as the north gate.

10. The two opening gates in the lower parts of this are the western gates and these are called here the anus and the penis. *Khadyota* and *Āvir-mukhī*, the two gates that are constructed at the same place adjacently in this city, are (known as) the eyes. By means of the power of seeing possessed by these, the Lord of the body (Purañjana or *Jīva*) perceives forms and colours which are called here the *Vibhrājit* country.

11.* *Nalinī* and *Nālinī* are the two nostrils, and smell has been called the *Saurabha* country. The faculty of smelling is designated *Avadhūta* (the companion of Purañjana). The gate called *Mukhyā* is the mouth. The organ of speech is (Purañjana's companion) *Vipaṇa* and the organ of taste is (the name of Purañjana's friend) *Rasajña* or *Rasavid*.

12. *Āpaṇa* or the market signifies here as (the region of) speech activity while *Bahūdana* means the varieties of food. The right ear is the Southern gate known as *Pitṛhū* and the left the Northern gate is remembered as *Devahū*.

13. The scriptures (*Śāstras*) which treat of the path of worldly activities (i.e. ritualistic *karmas*) and those which deal with abstention from such *karmas* and renunciation, are designated as the country of Pañcālas. Hearing to these through the faculty of hearing is called here *Śrutadhara* (the companion of Purañjana), the *Jīva* may proceed by the path of manes (*Pitṛs*) or of the gods.

14. The organ of generation is the western gate called *Āsurī*; the act of sexual intercourse is the region known as *Grāmaka*. The procreative ability (in the organ) is spoken of as *Durmada* (who was Purañjaña's friend). The anus is de-

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* The order of verses from 11 to 30 in the text before VR. and to some extent before VJ. is different.

signated as *Nirṛti* (the other western gate or the postern passage).

15. The hell is the region called *Vaiśasa*, while the power of the organ to defecate (through the anus) is called his friend *Lubdhaka*. And now, hear from me who the two blind ones are. They are (the pairs of) hands and feet with the help of which one makes movements and does work.

16. The harem is the heart and the mind is called *Viṣūci* (*Viṣūcīna*)—the principal officer over the harem. By the mind's attributes (like Sattva etc.), the Jīva attains to the state of infatuation, serenity or joy.

17. According as the *Buddhi* (intellect) is disturbed (in the dream state) or affects (the senses in the waking state) the *Jīva*, though (by nature) a mere witness, is tainted with her (*Buddhi's*) attributes, and is made to feel as if he is affected by those changes (directly)

18* The body is the chariot with horses in the form of senses, yoked to it. It (apparently) moves with the unimpeded speed of the year, though (actually) it is motionless. Good and evil actions are its two wheels. The three attributes (*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*) constitute its flagstaffs and the five vital airs (*Prāṇas* or *asus*) are its five cords.

19.** The mind is its rein (to control the horses); the Intellect is the charioteer; the heart is the seat; the pairs like pleasure and pain are the poles to which the yoke is rivetted; the objects of five senses are the weapons (for attack); the seven constituents of the body (viz. blood, flesh, fat, bones etc.) are its protective covers.

20. Ākūti (the five organs of actions, e.g. hands, feet, etc.) is its external motion. The *Jīva* vigorously runs after the mirage (-like objects of pleasure) with his army of eleven sense-organs (five cognitive and five conative sense-organs plus mind—the internal organ). He takes pleasure in five types of slaughter (i.e. wrongful enjoyment of five types of sense-ob-

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* These verses echo the following from *Kaṭha Up.* 1.3.3-4

** *Ātmānaṁ rathinaṁ viddhi, śarīraṁ ratham eva ca /*
Buddhiṁ hi sārathiṁ viddhi, manaḥ pragraham eva ca //
Indriyāṇi hayān āhur viṣayāṁs teṣu gocarān /
Ātmendriya-mano-yuktam bhoktetyāhur manīṣiṇaḥ//

jects by his five senses). The year which records the passage of time is *Caṇḍavega* (the king of Gandharvas).

21. Here the three hundred and sixty male Gandharvas under his command are the days and an equal number of female Gandharvas are the nights. By their turns, they take away the life of man by rotation.

22. *Kāla-Kanyā* is the old age incarnate. People do not greet her. Death, the king of Yavanas, adopted her as his sister for the (help in the) destruction of the world.

23. Mental anguishes and physical pains and diseases are his active Yavana soldiers. *Prajvāra* means the two types of fever (one accompanied with cold and the other with high temperature which is said to have a swift career to harass living beings.

24. Thus for a period of one hundred years, the embodied Jīva, covered as he is by dark ignorance, is being tormented in his body with various types of afflictions caused by supernatural agencies, (*adhidaivika*), elements (*adhibhautika*) and his body (*adhyātmika*).

25. Though he is essentially attributeless, he superimposes on himself the attributes of *Prāṇa* (such as hunger, thirst), the qualities of sense-organs (e.g. blindness, deafness) and the attributes of the mind (for example : passions of love, hate etc.). He lies confined to the body brooding over trifling pleasures of the senses and he continues to perform actions under the (influence of the) false notions of I-ness and mine-ness.

26. When the Jīva, though by nature self-luminous (i.e. self-knowing), does not recognise (himself to be) the glorious Supreme Preceptor, the Soul, he gets attached (and bound) to the attributes of *Prakṛti*.

27. Regarding the attributes as referring to his own self, he then helplessly commits actions which are white (*sāttvika*), black (*tāmasa*) and red (*rājasa*) and is born in various species of life according to the nature of his actions.

28. By his white (i.e. *sāttvika*) actions, he sometimes attains to worlds (like *Svarga*) which are full of light. Sometimes (by his red i.e. *rājasa* actions) he goes to regions which result in (i.e. lead to) sufferings and require exertion through

activities. And sometimes (by *tāmasika* actions), he takes birth in regions which are full of darkness (i.e. ignorance) and grief.

29. This *Jīva* with blind (i.e. deluded) intelligence is sometimes (born as) a male, a female, an impotent person, a god or a man or as a subhuman being according to his previous actions and the (dominant) attribute of *Prakṛti*.

30-31. Just as a poor starving dog which goes from door to door, gets (beating with) a stick or cooked rice (according) as destined by fate, the *Jīva*, with his heart full of desires, wanders, by paths which are high (as prescribed by religion) or low (as prohibited by scriptures), through higher (celestial) worlds, lower (infernal) regions or the middle (human) world and experiences pleasure or pain as ordained by fate.

32. There is no immunity to the *Jīva* even from one type of miseries which are caused by superhuman agencies like gods (*adhi-daivika*), by other beings (*adhi-bhautika*) and these relating to one's body (*adhyātmika*). Even if the remedy (against them) is sought, it is temporary and is (again) of the nature of misery.[148]

33. Just as a man carrying a heavy load on his head, places it on his shoulder (for relief), so are all remedies (of the nature of misery itself).

34. Oh sinless King ! Mere act (without the knowledge of the truth and accompanied with some desire) cannot be the effective final remedy against (the miseries etc. resulting from) another act (*karman*) as both are the outcome of *avidyā* (ignorance). It (such attempt to terminate one *karma* by another) is like a dream within dream (wherein there is an exchange of dream-consciousness but no termination of dreams as in wakefulness).

35.* Just as a person wandering in the dream-land with his mind which as *liṅga śarīra* (subtle body) forms the limita-

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148. There is no remedy against misery, the only remedy being the worship and contemplation of God—VR.

* VR. : The state of being a god, a man is not inherent in the nature of the Soul. It is due to the working of the mind that one falsely identifies the Soul with the body and experiences miseries. But they are like dream experiences.

tions of the Soul (and experiences fear, misery etc. till he wakes up from the dream to realize the unreality of that experience), the *saṁsāra* (transmigration of the Soul in the miserable world) does not come to an end (while his sleep of ignorance continues) in spite of the non-reality of the phenomenal world.

36. It is ignorance (or Mind—*manas*) that causes the uninterrupted chain of miseries[150] (or transmigration) to the Soul which is essentially the real existence. The chain of *saṁsāra* is cut asunder by Supreme devotion[151] to the Preceptor (Hari)[152].

37. When the *Yoga* of (self-less, disinterested) devotion to Lord Vāsudeva[153] is established in the proper manner[154], it (automatically) causes renunciation (of worldly pleasures) and manifests knowledge.

(ii) VJ. : The transmigration of the Soul (*saṁsṛti*) does not cease to be till one does not realise Hari directly (*arthe avidyamāne*) just as dream experiences continue till one awakes (to find that those experiences were unreal.)

As Madhva regards this world as real, VJ. takes pains to explain that the analogy between the dream and the world shall not be stretched too far and that 'the absence of knowledge of the reality-as-it is' is the common factor between the experiences in the dream and in the world and not the non-reality of the world. The implication of *hi* is that, if a person, born in *saṁsāra*, does not attain to the real knowledge of Hari, his *saṁsāra* is purposeless and fruitless.

(iii) GD.: Just as waking up from sleep is the only remedy against the miseries one experiences in dreams, realization of the Self is the only remedy against *avidyā* (nescience); other remedies cannot cut the vicious circle of the transmigration of the Soul and consequent miseries which are caused by 'I-ness' and 'mine-ness'.

150. *anartha*—The illusion about the identity of the body with the Soul—SD.

151. *paramayā bhaktyā*—Devotion which is superior to austerities, vows, ritualistic acts and even the knowledge of the Soul—SD.

152. Devotion to Hari which generates knowledge should be performed as it terminates *Saṁsāra*—VJ.

153. Who is knowledge and renunciation incarnate and is the controller of the universe and giver of knowledge—GD.

154. *Sadhrīcīnena* : (i) by burning down all evils in the mind by the fire of Breath-control—VJ.

(ii) By person who is free from worldly desires—VJ.

38. That *Bhakti-yoga* dependent as it is on the stories of Lord Acyuta, will be mastered before long by him who always listens to those stories with faith or devoutly studies them every day, Oh royal sage.

39. Oh King ! (He can listen to those stories) in places where pious and pure-hearted votaries of the Lord narrate and listen to the glorification of the attributes of the Lord with eager hearts.

40. There (to the congregation of the devotees) flow forth from all sides rivers (entirely) of pure nectar (in the form) of stories of Lord Viṣṇu (the destroyer of demon Madhu) sweetly sung by noble souls. Oh King ! Those who drink those (nectar-like stories) with intent ears and without being surfeited, are never touched (affected) by hunger, thirst, fear, sorrow and delusion.

41. (In the absence of the company of the pious), being always harassed by these natural troubles, the world of beings (i.e. men) does not cherish any real love for the ocean of nectarlike stories of Lord Hari indeed !

42-44. Brahmā (the chief among the progenitors) himself, the venerable Lord Śiva (the Lord of mountains), Manu, Dakṣa and other lords of creation, Sanaka and life-long celibates, expounders of the Vedas like Marīci, Atri, Aṅgiras, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Bhṛgu, Vasiṣṭha—these and others ending with me—all masters of speech could not, to this day, see the Supreme Lord, the Seer of all, though (we have been) trying to visualize him by means of penance, *upāsanā* (worship) and meditation.

45* Those who meticulously study the meaning of the Vedas which are of very great expanse and fathomless in the depth of meaning, and worship him in his limited form (such as Indra etc.) the characteristics of which (viz. wielding a

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* (i) VR : The realization of god is possible by worshipping (*upāsanā*) him only and not by mere knowledge or by *karma* (ritualist act) only.

(ii) JG. & VG : Persons devoted to ritualistic acts (*karmas*) only, never realise God.

(iii) SD : The Veda directs persons not favoured by the Lord, to perform ritualistic acts (e.g. sacrifices) for attaining the Heaven and not to the worship and service of the Lord.

Vajra etc.) are detailed in the Mantras (Vedic text), do not know the Supreme Lord.

46. When the Lord who is being meditated upon in the heart by a person, shows his grace unto the meditator, the person (so favoured) withdraws his mind, howsoever deeply attached (it may be) to the ways of the world, and to the ritualistic acts prescribed in the Vedas.

47. Oh Barhiṣman ! Do not therefore look upon as real the acts (ritualistic *karmas*) which appear as real through ignorance. These acts are pleasant and attractive to listen to, but they do not even touch (i.e. have any relation with) the ultimate Reality.

48. Those whose intellect is occupied with *dhūmra-mārga* (the path of ritualistic acts like sacrifices etc.)[155] call the Vedas as prescribing the ritualistic acts only. They have not grasped the truth about the Veda. For they have not realized that the Ātman (the Soul) which is their own essential Self, is implicitly intended in the Vedas. These (devotees of the path of Karma) do not know the region where god Viṣṇu (Janārdana) dwells (much less Janārdana himself).

49. Having encircled the entire sphere of the earth with *darbha*-grass by spreading them with their ends to the East, you have become haughty, (and) proud by slaughtering a great many beasts (in sacrifices). You do not know what is *karma* and what is superior to *karma*. The act that pleases Hari is the real *karma*. And the knowledge which leads to the fixation of the mind in Hari is the real knowledge.

50. Hari is the Soul of the embodied beings as well as their Ruler. He is their independent cause (the material cause of the universe). The soles of his feet are the real asylum to all, for in them lies the well-being (and security) of all men here.

51. Verily he is the most beloved one, the Soul (*Ātman*). By resorting to him, there is not the slightest fear or misery (as in the cases of others). He who knows this, is indeed the learned one. He who is learned is the (real) preceptor and he is (veritable) Hari himself.

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155. Or whose intelligence has been smoky and impure—ŚR.

Nārada said :

52. In this way, your question is completely answered, Oh excellent one among men! Now listen to me carefully as I tell you, a secret yet definitely ascertained truth.

53. Find out the deer which ignoring the blood-thirsty wolves (which are waiting) ahead and unmindful of (the coming of the arrow) shot from behind by a hunter to pierce it, strolls about in a flower-garden enamoured of its female associate, grazing tender grass and with its ears spell bound with the music of humming beas.

54. Oh King! You should look upon yourself as the doomed deer whose heart is pierced with a hidden arrow discharged by the hunter, viz., the god of Death, who chases you unperceived from behind. You who, in the house resorted to by women who are similar to flowers (in their ephemeral youthful charms which fade away very soon), seek after the most insignificant dose of sensual pleasures of taste and sex which are extremely minute like the fragrance and honey in flowers and are the result of ritualistic acts (*karmas*) performed with a motive, for attaining a particular object. Co-habiting with women and with your mind firmly attached to them, your ears are extremely charmed by the sweet conversation with women and others—conversation which is extremely attractive like the sweet honey of swarms of bees. You are enjoying yourself in the house, completely oblivious of the small components of time amounting to days and nights which, like a pack of wolves ahead of you, prey upon your life.

55. Having carefully considered your own behaviour (as being) like that of the deer (in the above verse), you, who are so conditioned, restrain your mind in the interior of your heart, and the stream-like outgoing tendencies of your ears (and other senses) in your mind. Renounce the householder's stage of life (lit. women's house) with its talk about extremely lustful and lascivious gatherings; (Do try to) please the Lord who is the shelter of *jīvas* (*hamsas*) and withdraw step by step (from everything else)."

The King said :

56. "Oh Brahman ! What Your venerable Lordship has spoken has been heard and reflected over by me. The sacrificial priests do not know this. Would they not have spoken (about it to me) if they had known it ?

57. You have thoroughly resolved a great doubt raised by them (my preceptors) in this matter (pertaining to the Soul). (But a doubt still lingers). For even sages are deluded in the realm which is beyond the range of senses, Oh Brāhmaṇa sage. (The Vedists say :)

58. Leaving in this world the body with which a person begins to perform acts (*karmas*), he enjoys the consequent fruits (of those *karmas*), elsewhere (in the next world) through a different body.

59. This doctrine of the Vedists (the knowers and advocates of Vedic *karmas*) is heard everywhere. (But how is it possible when the two bodies viz., the performer of an action and the enjoyer of the fruit of that action are different?) (The second doubt is :) As soon as an act prescribed in the Vedas is performed, it disappears and does not become visible. (Thus due to the cessation of an act, its consequent fruit is an impossibility)".

60. A person enjoys the fruits of an action in the next world with the same subtle body with which he performs the act (in this world), and thus, there is no interruption (i.e. change of the subtle body and the mind).*

61. Just as a person (in a dream) forgets his identity with this body (which is) lying and breathing, and experiences (in the dream) impressions of actions recorded in the mind, similarly (he experiences the fruits of his actions committed here) with another body similar (to the previous one) or belonging to another kind (as of a god or of a sub-human being).

62. Whatever body the jīva assumes by saying in his mind that 'these (wife and sons) are mine' and 'I am this body (e.g. a Brāhmaṇa)' he accepts (the responsibilitiy of) the

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* ŚR. adds :—Due to the persistence of the subtle mental body even after the destruction of the physical body, there is no logical discrepancy in this.

karmas committed by that body and thereby (he gets) a subsequent birth.

63. Just as (tendencies of) the mind (that direct activities) are inferred by the behaviour and activities of both the conative and cognitive sense-organs so are the acts committed by the body in the previous birth, inferred from the natural inclinations of the mind.

64. What is never and nowhere experienced or seen or heard by this (present) body, is sometimes experienced (in dream etc.) according to the form as it is impressed on the mind (in the previous birth).

65. Therefore, Oh King, definitely believe that the *jīva*, dependent as he is on his subtle body consisting of *vāsanās* (*karmic* impressions left on the mind), had a previous body which has undergone that type of experience. For the mind is incapable of touching (perceiving) an object which is not experienced by it (previously).

66. May you be blessed! It is (the high and low propensities of) the mind which speak of the previous births of man as well as predict whether he will be born in a higher or lower form of life.[156]

67. Sometimes some impossibilities[157] with reference to place (e.g. a sea on the mountain top), time (e.g. stars by daylight) and action (e.g. getting one's self beheaded) are seen or heard in the mind (in dreams). (As these are impossible experiences even in previous births) these are to be inferred to be due to disturbed sleep etc. and these do not contradict the above (statement in verse 65.)

68. All objects which are within the ken of sense-perception enter the mind according to their (particular) order and in groups and disappear (after being so experienced). Hence (it is that) all persons possess a mind (with impressions of the past).

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156. *nābhaviṣyataḥ*—will not be born again or will be liberated —VC.

157. VJ. explains these impossibilities as due to mixing up of impressions. VC. explains the possibilities of these with reference to other times, places etc. For example : the sea is on the top of (the submerged) mount Maināka, stars appear in complete solar eclipse, disturbance in the humids or components of the body may give rise to strange dreams.

69. (Normally these objects appear in a serial order but some times all of them present themselves simultaneously).

When the mind is firmly established in pure Sattva (uncontaminated with *rajas* and *tamas*) and is in the presence of the venerable Lord (in meditation), the whole universe shines forth united with the Lord, like the dark planet Rāhu appears on the disc of the Moon (at the time of lunar eclipse). (It is the experience of Yogins that sometimes all objects simultaneously flash on the pure mind).

70. (Thus the doubt that the performer of an act and the enjoyer of its fruits are different is dispelled by the proven continuity of the same subtle body) as the notion of 'I' and 'mine' about the physical body which conditions the *jīva*, will persist (i.e. will not cease to exist) so long as this beginningless subtle body which is the result of the conglomeration of intellect (*Buddhi*), mind, the senses (and their) objects and the triad of *guṇos* (*sattva* etc.), continues.

71. Due to suspension of the passage of Prāṇa (i.e. of sense-activity) in deep sleep, unconsciousness, extreme anguish (due to bereavement of the near ones), as well as in high fever and at the time of death, the sense of 'I-ness' is unmanifest (dormant).

72. Just as the moon (though existent) is not seen in the night of the new-Moon day, due to underdevelopment of senses and organs in the embryonic stage, and even in infancy the notion I-ness does not clearly manifest itself in the eleven sense organs (ten sense-organs *plus* the internal organ—the mind) as it does in the case of a full-grown youth.

73. Just as (in spite of the unreality of the objects and events in dreams) the unpleasant happenings in the dream do not cease to be (till one is awakened), the *saṁsāra* (the cycle of the transmigration of the Soul) does not come to an end in the case of one who broods over the objects of pleasure, even though the objects are (in reality) non-existent.

74. Thus the subtle body (*liṅga*) is constituted of five subtle elements; is extended by the development of sixteen modifications (viz. 5 Prāṇas+1 mind + 10 Indriyas—sense); is a product of three *guṇas* (*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*). When

it is united with consciousness, it (the whole aggregate) is called *jīva*.

75. It is through the subtle body that the *jīva* takes over or casts off (different) bodies. And it is by this that he experiences delight, sorrow, fear, misery or happiness.

76. Just as the caterpillar does not go away (from its first foot-hold on the blade of grass) and moves on (only after getting a firm foothold on another blade), the *jīva*, even while dying, does not let go his identity with its previous body (which he is giving up even at the point of death).

77. While he does not attain to another (i.e. the next) body by the exhaustion of the *karmas* (which were the cause of the previous dying body), the mind alone is the cause of birth and death (i.e. the *saṁsāra*) of beings, Oh King.

78. When, brooding over sensual pleasure (enjoyed by it), the *jīva* frequently indulges in *karmas* for achieving them. As a result of those *karmas* he, being subject to *avidyā* (nescience or ignorance), gets bound up with *karmas* of the body and the like.

79. Hence, in order to free yourself from the bondage of *avidyā* you worship Hari with all your heart, looking upon the universe as identical with him, for everything : the creation, maintenance and withdrawal of the universe is due to him."

Maitreya said :

80. Venerable Nārada, the chief votary of the Lord, explained to him the real nature of the swans (*jīva* and the *Paramātman*) and bidding good bye to him, he then went to the realm of the *Siddhas*.

81. The royal sage Prācīnabarhis passed on instructions (to his minister for conveying them) to his sons for the protection of his subjects and retired to the hermitage of Kapila for performing penance.

82. In that hermitage, the warrior, being free from attachment and with thoroughly concentrated mind, worshipped the lotus-like feet of Govinda with earnest devotion and attained a personality similar to the Lord.

83. Oh sinless Vidura, he who will listen to or make

others listen to this spiritual allegory sung by the divine sage Nārada, is emancipated from his subtle body.

84. He who gets by heart, while it is being sung, this self-purifying account which was issued from the mouth of a great divine sage and which purifies the world by the glories of Lord Mukunda (Kṛṣṇa) and which brings in the highest reward, becomes free from all bondages and does not wander in the *saṁsāra*.

85. This is what I understood of this wonderful allegory about the Soul. I have narrated to you about *saṁsāra* by the alllegory of the householder's life and have dispelled the doubt as to how the fruit of *karmas* is enjoyed in the other world.

CHAPTER THIRTY

(The Story of Pracetasas—Their Marriage with Māriṣā and the birth of Dakṣa)

Vidura said :

1. What well-being did the sons of Prācīnabarhis mentioned by you, accomplish by propitiating Hari through repeatedly reciting the hymn sung by Rudra, Oh Brahman.

2. Oh pupil of Bṛhaspati (Maitreya)! Meeting by a lucky chance god Śiva (the Lord of mount Kailāsa), the Pracetasas who won the grace (lit. became favourite personal attendants of the Lord of *Kaivalya* or Liberation,[158] must have certainly attained to their highest goal in life (viz. Liberation or *Mokṣa*). Please tell me: Have they attained it here or hereafter?

Maitreya said :

3. Pracetasas who wished to carry out the order of their father remained under the waters of the sea (-like

158. i.e. Viṣṇu—VJ.

lake)[159] and propitiated the creator of all bodies (i.e. Viṣṇu) by worshipping him with repeated recitation (of the hymn sung by Rudra) and by practising austerities.

4. At the end of (the penance covering) ten thousand years, the Eternal Supreme Man (Lord Viṣṇu) manifested himself to them in a purely *sāttvika* form, completely pacifying their trouble of penance by his soothing splendour.

5. Like a (dark-blue) cloud on the peak of mount Meru (which is of pure gold) he rode over the shoulders of Garuḍa. He wore a yellow garment and had the Kaustubha gem in his necklace. By his splendour he dispelled the darkness from all directions.

6. His cheeks as well as his entire face appeared refulgent with bright gold ornaments (shedding a spectrum of variegated light of the precious stones set in ornaments). He wore a brilliant crown. He was wielding (lit. was attended upon by) eight weapons[160] (in his eight hands). He was waited upon by his attendants, sages and prominent gods (like Brahmā); His glory was being sung by the celestial singer Garuḍa with the fluttering of his (*Veda*-) wings.

7. The First (Ancientmost or Supreme) Man was garlanded with a wreath of forest-flowers (*vanamālā*) which vied in beauty with the goddess Lakṣmī who beautified the central space (His chest) encircled by His eight long and mighty arms. He looked with compassion at the sons of Barhiṣmat (the Pracetasas) who sought his protection, and addressed to them in deep voice like the rumbling of clouds.

The Venerable Lord said :

8. May you be blessed, Oh Princes! Due to your strong mutual love, you are following the same religious observances. I am highly pleased with you by your brotherly affection. You seek a boon from me.

9. A man who will daily remember you at dusk and

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159. Vide supra 4.24.20; 4.25.2.

160. VR. enumerates them : a conch, the disc—*Sudarśana*, the mace *Kaumodakī*, a lotus, the Śārṅga bow, an arrow, a sword, a shield. He defends the inclusion of a lotus as weapon by *chatri-nyāya*.

dawn, will love his brothers like his own self and will cherish friendliness to all living beings.

10. I shall bestow whatever boon is desired from me and brilliant intellect as well, to those who every morning and evening praise me with concentrated mind, with the hymn (which Rudra sang).

11. Since you have, with gladness, accepted and carried out the command of your father, your enviable glory will spread all over the worlds.

12. You will have a glorious son who is not inferior to Brahmā (the creator) in excellent attributes and who will fill (i.e. populate) the whole of these three worlds with his progeny.

13. Oh Princes ! A lotus-eyed girl was born to (a heavenly nymph called) Pramlocā from (a sage by name) Kaṇḍu. When the girl was abandoned (by her mother) (the presiding deity of) trees took charge of her.

14. When she, being hungry, began to cry, king Soma (the Moon god) who was moved with compassion, put his index finger overflowing with nectar, in her mouth.

15. You are commanded to increase population by your father who is (now) my follower. Therefore, marry that beautiful girl (with fine hips) without delay.

16. All of you are observers of the same vows (e.g. protection of subjects) and are of similar disposition (good-naturedness, high moral character etc.). She will completely dedicate her heart to you all and hence will have the same disposition and observe the same vows. (Hence there will be no conflict). May this beautiful lady (with a slender waist) be your wife.

17. Without any diminution in physical vigour, you will enjoy the earthly and heavenly pleasures through my grace, for a period of one million celestial years.

18. Then through your firm devotion to me, the impurities (such as lust, hate) in your heart will be burnt. Being disgusted with the hell (-like pleasures of this world and the next), you will attain to my abode.

19. Even in the case of those men who enter householder's life, if they dedicate all their actions to me and spend

their time in talking and hearing about my stories, the householder's life does not result in a bondage to them.

20. By listening to the discourses about me, by those who are well-versed in the Vedas, I, the Omniscient Lord, enter the heart of those devotees as if I become new one (every moment). This entry (i.e. my manifestation) into the heart itself is the realization of Brahman, for those who reach me are not deluded, grieved nor are elated.

Maitreya said :

21. When Lord Viṣṇu (Janārdana), the conferrer of the objectives in human life (viz. *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *Mokṣa*) and the best Friend of all, spoke to them thus, Pracetasas, whose impurities of *tamas* (ignorance) and *rajas* (emotions and passions) have been perfectly cleansed at his sight, bowed him with folded hands and addressed to him with their voice choked (with tears).

Pracetasas said :

22. "Many salutations to the Lord who destroys all types of misery and whose excellent attributes and names have been considered (by the Vedas and knowers of the Brahman) as the means of attaining the highest good. Obeisance to him who surpasses the mind and speech in speed[161] and whose path is beyond the ken of all the senses.

23. In your own essential nature, you are pure, serene (and joy incarnate). The unreal appearance of duality in you is due to (the function of the) mind. For the creation, sustenance and dissolution of the universe, you have assumed forms (of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva) through the *guṇas* (attributes viz. *Sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*) of the Māyā. Our salutations to you.

24. Obeisance to Hari who is essentially pure *sattva* (unmixed with *rajas* and *tamas*), and knowledge about whom terminates the *saṁsāra*. Bow to Vāsudeva, Kṛṣṇa. the Lord of all *Sātvatas*.

25. Hail to you who have a lotus sprouted in the navel. Bow to the Lord, the wearer of a wreath of lotuses. Salutations

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161. Cf. *tad dhāvato'nyān atyeti tiṣṭhan* / Īśa. 4.

to the God with lotus-like feet. Obeisance to you, Oh lotus-eyed God!

26. Salutations to you who wear spotless, pure yellow garments like the filaments of the lotus. We bow to you who are the abode of all beings and a seer or witness of them all.

27. You have manifested to us who are afflicted with miseries, your form which annihilates all these kinds of trouble. What more grace could be shown? (This is the highest favour shown to us).

28. Oh destroyer of inauspiciousness! Only this much is to be done by the masters who are kind and compassionate to the poor that they should remember at the proper time, that the indigents are their own. (But in our case you have done much more than that in manifesting yourself to us).

29. Such remembrance (of the poor) brings peace and happiness to beings. Abiding as you are as *antaryāmin* (Inner Controller) in the hearts of even the most insignificant creatures, how is it that you do not know the blessing desired by us who are your devotees?

30. To us whom you are not only a guide to Liberation but a goal desired by us, the very fact that the Lord is pleased with us, is itself a boon sought by us.

31. We, however, seek a boon from you, Oh Lord, who are beyond the cause of causes i.e. *Prakṛti* (the prime cause of the universe). As there is no limit to your excellences or glories, you are extolled as Ananta (Infinite).

32. When the *Pārijāta* tree is easily found (by a lucky chance), a bee does not resort to any other tree. (Similarly), when we have found shelter at your feet directly, what other things should we seek?[162]

33. So long as we, being dominated by Māyā, are wandering here in the *saṁsāra* due to the force of our actions (*karmas*), may we be blest in every life with the companionship of devotees attached to you.

34. We do not consider (the pleasures in) heaven or even the final beatitude as equivalent to the companionship of

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162. Alternatively: (i) Why should we beg for other contemptible things?

(ii) If we are to seek anything there is no end to desires—ŚR.

your devotees (enjoyed even for a single moment). What of blessings like kingdom etc.) coveted by mortal beings?

35. In the company of Your votaries, sweet purifying stories (of the Lord) which pacify the thirst of desire are extolled. There is absence of enmity against all beings. Nor is there any fear to anybody.

36. There (in the company of devotees) the glorious Lord Nārāyaṇa Himself, the goal of Sannyāsins, is again and again extolled through sacred stories, by persons who are free from attachment.

37. Will not the association of your devotees who with a desire to purify the sacred places, move about on foot, be liked by a person afraid (of *saṁsāra*)?

38. Oh Lord! It is due to a moment's contact with your friend, god Śiva (Bhava) that we have today attained to you direct—you who are our goal and the best physician who cures the incurable malady of (the cycle of) births and deaths.

39-40. Oh Lord! (we seek the second boon:). Whatever we have properly studied, whatever troubles we have taken for propitiating the preceptors, Brāhmaṇas and elderly people by our compliance, the respects we paid to noble persons, friends, brothers and to all living beings without any jealousy, the austere penances we have performed without food, submerged in water for a very long period—may all this, we beseech you, contribute to the entire satisfaction and pleasure of yours—you who are the Omnipresent, the Supreme Man.

41. Manu, god Brahmā (the self-born), glorious Lord Śiva and others who have purified their hearts with penance and knowledge, praise your greatness even though they could not grasp the fullest extent of your glory. Hence we extol you according to our humble capacity.

42. Obeisance to you, the Supreme Man, who are equal to all and pure (unsoiled by Māyā). Salutation to you, glorious Lord Vāsudeva, who are pure *sattva* incarnate."

Maitreya said :

43. Thus extolled by Pracetasas, Hari who is affectionate to his devotees (lit. those who seek his shelter) and is of

irresistible prowess, became pleased with them and conferred that boon (saying 'So be it'.). Even though their eyes were not satiated by looking at him and they did not wish his departure, he returned to his abode.

44. Then the Pracetasas came out from the water of the sea (-like lake). Seeing the earth (wildly) covered with trees that had grown so tall as to obstruct the way to heaven, they flared up with wrath.

45. For rendering the earth tree-less, they then angrily breathed out from their mouth fire and wind, just as Saṁvartaka or Kālāgni Rudra does at the time of the dissolution of the universe.

46. Seeing the trees being thus reduced to ashes, god Brahmā appeared and pacified the sons of Barhiṣmat (Pracetasas) by reasoning.

47. Then the surviving trees which were terrified, acted upon the advice of god Brahmā and offered their daughter to Pracetasas.

48. In compliance of the command of god Brahmā, they (Pracetasas) married Mārişā (the daughter of the trees). Dakṣa, the former mind-born son of Brahmā (lit. one born of the unborn Viṣṇu), was born of her, on account of his (Dakṣa's) insulting the great god Śiva (formerly).

49. At the advent of the Cākṣuṣa Manvantara (the sixth aeon), when the previous creation was annihilated by the force of time[163] it was this Dakṣa who directed by the Lord, created the progeny as desired by him.

50. While he was being born, he eclipsed with his own splendour the light of all luminous bodies. He came to be called Dakṣa, the competent, on account of his precision and proficiency in the performance of ritualistic acts.

51. (The beginningless) god Brahmā installed him (as a Prajāpati—the protector of the creation) and appointed him to procreate and protect the creation. Dakṣa (in his turn) employed all other Prajāpatis—progenitors of creation—to perform their respective jobs.

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163. When Dakṣa's previous body was destroyed through the force of time (ŚR.).

CHAPTER THIRTYONE

(*The Story of Pracetasas : Their Renunciation and Liberation*)

Maitreya said :

1. Then (at the end of one million years of enjoying earthly and heavenly pleasures), superior knowledge dawned on Pracetasas. Remembering the words of Lord Viṣṇu (vide supra 4.30. 18), they entrusted their wife to the care of their son (Dakṣa) and immediately left their house (as recluses).

2. On the western sea-shore, at the place where (the sage) Jājali[164] attained the final beatitude, they resolved to engage themselves in (the sacrificial session in the form of) the enquiry about the Soul which leads to the realization that the Soul abides in all beings.

3. Nārada who was worthy of being praised by gods and demons (alike), saw them (Pracetasas) who controlled their vital breath, mind, speech and sight. Being the masters of their yogic (bodily) posture, their bodies were firm, unagitated and straight. They concentrated their minds on the Supreme, perfectly pure Brahman (unalloyed with Māyā).

4. Seeing him come, they (respectfully) stood up, bowed to him by lying prostrate before him and received him joyfully. They worshipped him with due formalities. When he was comfortably seated, they addressed to him.

Pracetasas said :

5. "Welcome is your arrival, Oh divine Sage! How glad we are that you have appeared before us today. Oh Brahman, your moving about (in the world) is like the movement of the Sun, for dispelling the fear of the people.

6. Whatever enlightenment was given to us by glorious Śiva and Lord Viṣṇu has been almost forgotten by us due to our strong attachment to house (householder's life).

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164. Jājali—An ancient sage famous for austere penance. When he felt pride about his spiritual attainment, he was directed to go to a merchant named Tulādhāra. The merchant enlightened him in spiritual matters after which Jājali attained Mokṣa (liberation).

—*MBH. Śānti.* 261-64; *PCK.* 371

7. Therefore, please kindle in us the light of the knowledge of the Soul which reveals the reality and by (realizing) which we shall easily cross the impassable sea of *saṁsāra*".

Maitreya said :

8. When enquired thus by Pracetasas, the venerable sage Nārada whose mind was merged in Lord Viṣṇu (of glorious renown) spoke to those kings.

Nārada said :

9. That life, those acts, that period of time, that mind, that speech of men are of some real worth in the world, if Hari, the Soul and Ruler of the universe is served by them.

10. If Lord Hari, who blesses us with self-realization is not attained, of what benefit is the three-fold birth, viz., through pure sinless parents, initiation ceremony and consecration (for the performance of sacrifice) ? What is the use of the (performance of) ritualistic duties enjoined by the three Vedas or a span of long life like that of gods' ?

11. Of what avail are the learning, austere penance, eloquent speech or the capacity to attend many things simultaneously ? Of what use is the keen intellectual capacity or physical power, high efficiency of senses ?

12. Of what use are the Yoga (consisting of breath control etc.) the Sāṁkhya (the knowledge of non-identity of the Soul and the body), the Sannyāsa (the life of a recluse) and the study of the Vedas and observances of other vows and renunciation.

13. For, as a matter of fact, the Self is the highest of all blessings (as they are liked and desired for the sake of the Self). Lord Hari is the Soul of all living beings. He is Self-giver (i.e. he manifests himself by the removal of *avidyā* or he gives form, power etc. similar to him to his votaries like Bali). He is dear (as he is by nature the highest bliss).

14. Just as watering the roots of a tree nourishes the trunk, branches, sub-branches (leaves and flowers of a tree, and just as the nourishment of the life (with food etc.) leads to the strengthening of the senses and organs of the body (and

not by applying food to those parts), so the worshipping of Acyuta (Lord Viṣṇu) is the worship of all.

15. Just as in the rainy season, waters (rain-drops) emanate from the Sun (the evaporator of waters which form the clouds and are the cause of subsequent rain-fall) and return to it again (as water vapour) in the summer, and just as the bodies of the mobiles and immobiles spring up from the earth and return to it, so does this universe of animate and inanimate things—the stream of *guṇas*—(emerge from and) merge in Hari.

16* This universe is the absolute, unconditioned essence of the universal Soul. (It is not different from him as it is

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*(I) VR. affirms the reality of the world as the universe has no separate existence except as the body of the Lord. Just as the light of the Sun and the Sun are inseparables, the whole universe is an inseparable attribute—the body of the Supreme Soul. Once, at the time of the creation, the universe appears as gross and at the time of the dissolution it becomes too subtle to be perceptible but its reality of existence persists, like the power of the sense-organs which are active in a waking state and inactive in sleep when illusions regarding the matter (the five elements) and the cognitive and conative sense-organs and one's being god, man etc. are lost.

(II) VJ. reads differently. Briefly stated : Referring to *hardveva guṇapravāhaḥ* in the above (15) verse, he refutes that Hari is conditioned by the *guṇas* or their products. This world wherein Hari dwells and which he has created is quite distinct and cannot condition him—the only relation between Hari and the universe is that of the supporter and the supported or the 'phantom city of Gandharvas' and the sky. Hari is essentially knowledge brilliant like the light of the Sun. And His wisdom dispels all illusions regarding the body (*dravya*), power etc. When due to accumulation of merits, the breath and other *Vṛttis* cease to work externally and begin to function internally, and awaken the *jīva*, and the illusions about the false identity of the Soul and the body, thinking one's self to be an independent doer and that of being the master of one's senses, are removed, the real Form of the Lord is manifested.

(III) SD. : The analogy of the Sun and the water (in the above No. 15—verse) may be misconstrued to show that the universe and the Lord are totally different. This verse refutes that misinterpretation. The relation between the Lord and the world is like that between the Sun and its light, viz. identity-cum-difference. It is identical yet different. Just as the powers of the sense-organs are manifest in wakefulness and dormant in sleep, so is the creation and dissolution of the universe. How can the *jīva* be released from the *prapañca* (universe) so related with Brahman ? It is by propitiation of Hari, the Soul of the universe, that illusions causing *saṁsāra*, viz. (i) the feeling of I-ness and mine-ness about one's

evolved from him) just as the light of the Sun is not different from the Sun in spite of the once (i. e. temporary) appearance of the phantom phenomenon called 'the city of Gandharvas' Just as the powers of the cognitive and conative organs function during wakefulness and lie dormant during sleep (the universe which appears at the time of the creation from the Lord, dissolves itself in the Lord at the end of Kalpa.). In reality, in the Lord, there is absence of the effects of three types of ego (viz. ego due to matter, action or thought or the types of ego known as *tāmasa, taijasa* and *vaikārika*)and the misapprehension of diversity (caused by it).

17* Just as clouds, darkness and light appear in the sky and also disappear in their turn (but do not stick to the sky), similarly, Oh King, the potencies called *sattva, rajas* and *tamas* appear in Brahman (without affecting it) and the flow (of creation and destruction of the universe) continues (undisturbed).

18. Therefore, adore (and meditate upon) the Lord directly as being not different from you. Hari is the one undifferentiated Soul of all embodied beings. He is Time (the effi-

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body, house etc. (ii) regarding ritualistic acts leading to heaven as leading to Mokṣa, (iii) wrongly believing in the teachings of Kapila, Kaṇāda, Buddha as true and leading to salvation.

(IV) GD. explains the position of *Brahma vāda* as follows : Hari being the material cause of the universe, the latter cannot be different from Hari. At the time of the creation it evolves from the Lord, the Soul of the universe and it is not different from him just as the light of the Sun is not distinct from it. The evanescence of the universe and the eternity of the Lord are not contradictory, for just as the power of the senses functions during the state of wakefulness and becomes dormant in sleep (but the power still persists in both the stages) the world appears at the time of the creation and ceases to be so at the time of dissolution. (It is however not destroyed). The creation of the universe and the supported-supporter relation between the universe and the Lord do not act as his limitations, for the Lord is a cause of extraordinary and miraculous nature and above popular analogies. He is free from the illusory contact of five elements, eleven sense-organs and their presiding deities.

*VR. insists on the reality of the universe : the appearance and disappearance of clouds, darkness and light do not imply their unreality. Similarly, the manifestation and disappearance of *sattva, rajas* and *tamas*, the three potencies of *Prakṛti* with relation to Brahman do not mean that they are unreal.

cient cause), *Prakṛti* (Primordial Nature, as the material cause), the Supreme Ruler (as the creator). By his own prowess (or lustre) he has destroyed (i.e. remained unaffected by) the flow of *guṇas*.

19. By compassion to all living beings, and by remaining contented with anything whatever and by pacifying urges of the senses by remaining detached from the objects of the senses, Hari becomes pleased in no time.

20. Hari, the imperishable Lord, is invited by continuously growing contemplation to the pure hearts of pious people who have dispelled all the cravings. He does not wish to move out of the space of the heart, for he remembers his obligations to his devotees.

21. Hari loves the poor people who regard him as their only wealth; for he can appreciate the sweet bliss in their devotion which is motiveless and is solely concentrated on him. Hari does not accept worship from such crooked-minded persons who out of pride for their own scholarship, opulence, parentage and achievements, despise indigent yet righteous people.

22. He is not attached to Śrī (his wife—the goddess of wealth and beauty) even though she (always) waits on him. Nor does he attend to kings and gods who entreat her favours. For he himself is absolutely perfect (bliss etc.). But he is (always) subservient to the will of his servants (devotees). (This being the case) how can anyone with a feeling of gratefulness abandon him?

Maitreya said:

23. In this way, sage Nārada, the son of Brahmā (the Self-born god) narrated (these and) other stories of Lord Hari to Pracetasas and returned to the region of Brahmā.

24. Having heard the glories of Hari as narrated by Nārada, and which remove the sins of the world, they (Pracetasas) meditated upon his feet and attained to his region.

25. Oh Vidura, I have now narrated to you everything that you requested me to tell, viz. the dialogue between Pracetasas and Nārada containing the glorification of Hari.

Śrī Śuka said:

26-27. This dynasty of Uttānapāda, the son of Manu has been described to you, Oh best of Kings ! Now listen from me the race of Priyavrata (Uttānapāda's elder brother) who obtained the spiritual lore from Nārada and who after enjoying (i.e. ruling over) the earth, divided his kingdom among his sons and attained to the Lord's abode.

28. Having heard this sanctifying story about the invincible Lord Hari, as described by Maitreya (Kauṣārava), Vidura was overwhelmed with emotions. With his eyes flowing with tears, he installed the feet of the Lord in his heart and held (i.e. bowed to) the sage's feet with his head.

Vidura said:

29. Oh great Yogin ! Compassionate at heart as you are, you have shown me today the other shore of the ocean of darkness (i.e. ignorance) where dwells Lord Hari who is realized by votaries who are solely devoted to him.

Śrī Śuka said:

30. Having bowed to him (Maitreya) and taking his leave, Vidura who was desirous of seeing his relatives returned with peaceful mind, to Hastināpura.

31. Oh King ! He who would listen to the account of kings who have dedicated their minds to Lord Hari, would be blest with (lit. obtain) longevity, affluence, glory, family-bliss (sons, grandsons etc.), sovereignty and eternal happiness (or godhood).

FIFTH SKANDHA

CHAPTER ONE*

(*The Life of Priyavrata*)

The king (Parīkṣit) said :

1. Priyavrata was a devotee of the glorious Lord. As such he was merged in the highest bliss of the Soul (*Ātman*). How is it that he took delight in the life of a householder as it is the root of the bondage of *karmas*, and obscures one's real nature (by diminution of knowledge), Oh omniscient sage ?

2. Oh most excellent Brāhmaṇa ! It is definitely unbecoming that men like him, who have given up all attachment, should cherish such intense attachment to family life (including Vedic rituals, children, wife etc.).

3. The high-souled persons whose minds have found happiness and delight under the shade[165] of the feet of Lord Viṣṇu of excellent renown, cannot definitely entertain an intense desire for family life, Oh Brāhmaṇa sage !

4. (It is possible that due to the power of fate, some persons who found delight in the Soul, may get attached to family life). But there is my great doubt as to how he (Priyavrata) attached to his wife, home, children etc., could attain Liberation, and could cultivate an unswerving devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa, Oh Brahman !

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*This *Skandha* presents the third characteristic—*Sthāna*—of this Purāṇa (SD., VD., GD.). At the end of the last *Skandha* 4.31.26-27 it is mentioned that Priyavrata was at first initiated into spiritual lore by Nārada, but he entered householder's life and after enjoying the kingdom of the earth, he renounced it and attained final beatitude. King Parīkṣit asked the question here.

165. *chāyā* : (i) Which removes (i.e. cools down) hot tormenting passions—ŚR.

(ii) Which removes *saṁsāra* and three types of misery—VR. VC.

(iii) Shade characterised by knowledge which removes torments of *saṁsāra*—VJ.

Śrī Śuka said :

5. Certainly, what you said is correct. But persons whose mind is possessed by (being soaked in) the honey of the lotus-like feet of the Lord of Śrī, Lord Viṣṇu of excellent renown[166] do not generally abandon their own blessed path of listening to the stories of the Lord, most loved by the great ascetics (*parama-haṁsas*) and the votaries of the Lord, even though their path might be temporarily obstructed (by some difficulties).

6. Oh King ! It is widely known that Prince Priyavrata was a great devotee of the Lord. By serving the feet of Nārada, he easily got insight into the real nature of the Soul. When he intended to dedicate his whole life to the abstract contemplation of the Supreme Soul, he was called upon by his father (Svāyambhuva Manu) to protect or to assume the responsibility of governing the world, as he (the Prince) was the sole receptacle of a host of excellent qualities (as pre-requisites of a ruler) as prescribed in the scriptures. By the *Yoga* of uninterrupted meditation, he (the Prince) had already resigned all the functions of his senses and organs solely to Lord Vāsudeva. He foresaw that by accepting office (of the king), his Self will be obscured by the duties and functions of the government, even though they be (essentially) unreal. Hence, even though the command of the father is not to be disobeyed, he did not welcome the order (to be a king).

7. Thereupon, the Self-born god Brahmā, the first among the gods, who correctly comprehends the intentions and desires of (everybody in) the world by his continuous thinking (and solicitude) for promoting the prosperity of the creation (world) which is the product of (three) *guṇas*, came down from his region (*Satyaloka*), surrounded by all the Vedas *incarnate*, and his retinue (consisting of Marīci and others).

8. During his journey through heavens, he was being worshipped at several points by great gods, riding their celestial cars. On his way through the sky, he was being eulogized by *troupes* of divine *artistes* like Gandharvas, Sādhyas, Cāraṇas

166. *uttamaśloka*—Who is glorified by excellent gods like Brahmā—VR.

and by Siddhas and sages. Illumining the whole valley of *Gandha-mādana* by his moon-like splendour, he approached the Prince.

9. (ŚR. asks us to understand that at this time, while Nārada was instructing Priyavrata, Manu also had come to take the Prince to his capital).

There, recognising by the vehicle—swan—that it was his father Lord Hiraṇya-garbha (Brahmā), Nārada rose up hastily and waited upon him with articles of worship, and along with the father and the son (Manu and Priyavrata), and offered prayers to him with folded hands.

10. Oh King Parīkṣit (Oh descendant of Bharata), Lord Brahmā, the Primeval Man, who was offered worship (by Nārada), and whose various excellent qualities, arrivals on the earth from Satyaloka (to confer boons), and glorious victories, were highly extolled in appropriate words, cast a smiling look, full of compassion at Priyavrata and spoke ·

The Lord (Brahmā) said :

11. Oh Child ! Try to understand carefully this truth that I am telling you. You should not find fault with the self-refulgent inscrutable God (who is beyond the ken of intelligence). For, we (I Brahmā, Marīci and other sages), god Rudra, your father (Svāyambhuva Manu), this great sage (Nārada)—all of us, being totally under his control, carry out his behests.

12. No embodied being can undo what is decreed by him, through austere penances, knowledge of *Śāstras*, the power of Yoga (or Yogic powers like *aṇimā*, *laghimā*), his intellectual capacity, wealth, religious acts, or with the help of another (powerful person) or with his own capacity.

13. Dear Priyavrata ! All living beings always maintain association with the body which is ordained by the unmanifest Lord, for (undergoing) birth, death, doing actions, (experiencing) sorrow, delusion, fear, pleasure and pain.

14. We are tightly bound together to the cord in the form of his Word (the Vedas), with the unbreakable strings in the form of *guṇas* (like *sattva*), and actions (suitable for one's own position and stage—*varṇa* and *āśrama*—in life), Oh child !

We all offer worship to the Supreme Lord like quadruped animals (controlled) with a string woven through their nostrils, carrying loads for the bipeds (men).

15. For, dear Priyavrata, we accept whatever form of existence (e.g. gods, subhuman beings) is assigned to us by the Lord, according to our attachment to *guṇas* (*sattva* etc.), and actions (*karmas*); experience pleasure or pain (as ordained by him) like the blind led by a person endowed with eye-sight.

16. Even though a person is liberated, he should maintain his body, experiencing the fruits he is destined to reap, but without identifying himself with the body, just as a man, awakened from sleep, remembers the experienced dream (in a detached manner without identifying himself in the dream condition). He does not seek after attributes which lead to next body (birth).

17. (He answers the objection : as there cannot be detachedness in the householder's life due to one's indulgence in pleasure, one should renounce it and resort to forests). The fear of *saṁsāra* (cycle of births and deaths) persists in the case of a person who has not controlled his senses, even though he (leaves his house and) wanders from forest to forest (out of fear of attachment). (For) he stays in the forest beset with his six (internal) enemies (viz. uncontrolled mind and five cognitive senses). On the other hand, what harm can the householder's life possibly do to a wise man who has subdued his senses and who is absorbed in the bliss of his Soul.

18* He who wishes to subdue his (above-mentioned) six enemies, should first enter the householder's life, and intensively try to do so, like a king who, resorting to his stronghold, (first) overcomes his powerful enemies. When the enemies have been weakened, the wise man may go about (to another *āśrama*—stage of life) at will.

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*VJ. : A person desirous of subduing his enemies in the form of senses should first stay in the householder's stage of life. After getting satiated (*alam buddhim prāpya*) by enjoying pleasure, he should try for his final beatitude. In the householder's life, however, he should stay in the stronghold, viz. devotion to the Lord and curb his powerful enemies viz. senses eager for enjoyment, by restraining himself from enjoying pleasures and thus bring the senses under control. When the desire of sense-enjoyment recedes, the wise man may fearlessly proceed (with the Lord's devotion).

19. But you have already fortified yourself in the castle in the form of the lotus-like feet of Lord Viṣṇu (the god with a lotus sprouting from his navel), and have conquered the six enemies. Therefore, (you should) now enjoy the blessings bestowed upon you by the Supreme Person, and then renouncing all attachment, you should resort to your essential nature (viz. the Self—*ātman*).

Śrī Śuka said :

20. (Priyavrata) the great devotee of the Lord who was thus addressed (by Brahmā), bent his head low, with a sense of his own smallness (before god Brahmā) and respectfully acquiesced in the command of the venerable Preceptor of the three worlds (viz. Brahmā), with the words 'Yes Sir'.

21. Venerable Brahmā was worshipped with due formalities by Manu. And while Priyavrata and Nārada were looking on calmly (without any rancour for the frustration of their original plans), he retired to his abode, meditating upon the Supreme Brahman, his own asylum, who is beyond the range of speech, mind and actions (*avyavahṛtam*).

22. Manu also got his desired object (of retiring to forest after appointing his son to the throne), fulfilled by the great god Brahmā With the consent of the great divine sage Nārada, he installed his son to protect and stabilise his sway over the whole of earth. As for himself, he (Manu) renounced his desire of householder's life which is like an unfordable poisonous lake of sensual enjoyments.

23. In this way, it was by the will of the Supreme Lord that Priyavrata, the Lord of the world was invested with powers to execute his duties (of kingship). He burnt down the impurities in his heart, by dint of constant meditation of the pair of feet of the Lord, the Supreme First Person, Whose supreme glory is capable of destroying the bondage of the whole world. Pure as he (Priyavrata) was, he governed the kingdom of the earth in order to show his regard to the great (god Brahmā and others, by carrying out their command to rule).

24. Then, he married the daughter, by name Barhiṣmatī, of Viśvakarmā, the Lord of created beings. And as

known to all, he got by her, ten sons, all of whom were great like him in character qualities, capacity of work, beauty of form and prowess, and a daughter, youngest of all, by name Ūrjasvatī.

25. All of them were named after the fire-god—Agni—(viz.) Agnīdhra, Idhmajihva, Yajñabāhu, Mahāvīra, Hiraṇyaretas, Ghṛtapṛṣṭha, Savana, Medhātithi, Vīti-hotra, Kavi.

26. Out of these Kavi, Mahāvīra and Savana were lifelong celibates. Since their infancy, they cultivated acquaintance (i.e. took to the study of) the science of the Soul (spiritualism) and adopted the order of Paramahaṁsas (the highest type of recluses).

27. (While) in that (order of Paramahaṁsas), those great sages who were habituated to self-control and tranquillity, uninterruptedly meditated upon the beautiful lotuslike feet of the venerable Lord Vāsudeva who is the abode of all species of living beings and the place of refuge for those who are afraid (of death or *saṁsāra*). They realized the Lord within their heart which becomes thoroughly purified by the power of steadfast and supreme Yoga of devotion (born of that ceaseless contemplation). And freeing themselves from the conditioning gross body, they became absolutely identical with the Lord who is Soul of all beings.[167]

28. By another wife also, he had three sons (named) Uttama, Tāmasa and Raivata, each of whom ruled over a *Manvantara*.

29. While (three of) his sons were practising self-control, the Lord of the earth ruled over the world for one hundred and ten million years.[168] (During his reign) the enemies of righteousness were deterred by the twang of the bow-string pulled by his mighty pair of arms possessing enormous power whereby all his heroic undertakings became successful without any obstruction. The high-minded king enjoyed (the plea-

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167. VR. interprets *pratyag* as *jīva* 'individual soul' and *bhūta* as 'insentient bodies' (*a-caitanya-śarīrakatvam*). Thus VR. explains : They (the Princely Sages) realized that the individual Soul (*Jīvātman*) is like a body to and not separable from the Supreme Soul (Paramātmam). Thus they attained to a state like him (*Sādharmyam*).

168. *arbuda*=Ten crores (1000,000,00) years.

sures of life) as if he had not realised his true Self or had his judgment clouded by queen Barhiṣmatī's expression of daily increasing raptures in greeting him with her amorous womanly charms, her smiles and side-glances half-concealed by bashfulness and by witty conversations.

30. (Once he noticed that) even to the extent of the world (upto the Lokāloka mountain), over which the Sun shines during his circumambulation round Mount Meru (the mount of gods), it gives light to half the surface of the earth while leaves the other half to be enveloped in darkness. He did not approve of it. As his super-human power was enhanced by the adoration of the Lord, he decided to turn even the night into the day, by (riding in his) luminous chariot, equalling the Sun in speed. Thus, like a second Sun, he made seven circuits closely following the Sun (on the heels).

31. Verily, the wonderful moat-like tracks left by the fellies of the wheels of his chariot, became the seven seas which divided the earth into seven island continents (*dvīpas*).

32* They (*dvīpas*) are called Jambū, Plakṣa, Śālmali, Kuśa, Krauñca, Śaka and Puṣkara. As regards their dimensions, each succeeding island-continent is double in area as that of the previous one, and is surrounded by an ocean separating it (from the other).

33** The seven oceans are respectively of salt-water, juice of sugar-cane, wine, clarified butter, milk, curds and pure

*This concentric division of the earth in seven island-continents is mentioned by Patañjali (2nd cent. A.D.), and is common to *Viṣṇu P.* (2.4), *Mārkaṇḍeya P.* (54.6), and with a variation in *Matsya P.* (121, 122) and *Agni P.* 108.1.3. The arrangement is briefly as follows : (1) Jambūdvīpa surrounded by an ocean of salt water. Beyond this ocean and encircling is *Plakṣa-dvīpa* which is double the area of Jambūdvīpa. (2) Plakṣa-dvīpa is surrounded by the ocean of sugar-cane juice which in turn is engirdled by (3) Śālmalidvīpa. The ocean of wine surrounds this *dvīpa* and is encircled by (4) Kuśadvīpa with the ocean of clarified butter around it. (5) *Krauñcadvīpa* surrounds this ocean and is itself engirlded by an ocean of milk. (6) *Śākadvīpa* surrounds the ocean of milk and is itself encircled by ocean of curds (7) *Puṣkaradvīpa* surrounds this ocean of curds and is encircled by the ocean of fresh (sweet) water.

**N. L. De in GDAMI. 179, identifies the seven seas or oceans as follows : (1) Salt water sea—The Indian ocean surrounding Jambūdvīpa or India; (2) *Kṣīra* (Milk ocean)—Shirwan alias the Caspian Sea; (3)

(fresh) water. They serve as moats to each of the island-continent. They are equal in extent to the continent they encircle. Each one of the oceans is in a serial order, the outer boundary of the continent surrounded by it. Priyaṿrata (the consort of Barhiṣmatī) severally installed as ruler, dutiful sons by name Agnīdhra, Idhmajihva, Yajñabāhu, Hiraṇyaretas, Dhṛtapṛṣṭha, Medhātithi, Vītihotra—each being the ruler of one of the continents such as Jambūdvīpa and others.

34. He gave his daughter called Ūrjasvatī in marriage to Uśanas (Śukra, the preceptor of demons), and of her was born Devayānī also called Kavya-suta (the daughter of Kavi, i.e., Śukra).

35. Such heroic achievements are not impossible in the case of devout men who, by the (efficacy of the) dust of the feet of Lord Viṣṇu (who as Trivikrama took the universe in his long strides), have conquered the six senses (five cognitive senses and the inner organ—mind) or six anxieties (such as physical hunger and thirst, grief and delusion, old age and death). For if, a man even from the lowest caste, utters but once the name (of god Viṣṇu), he immediately shakes off the shackles of *Saṁsāra*.

36. In this way Priyavrata, a possessor of immeasurable strength and prowess, once felt disgusted with himself as he found himself to be dissatisfied with the contact with the product of *guṇas* (in the form of his kingship and worldly enjoyment) which fell to his lot, even after his resorting to the feet of (the) celestial sage Nārada, and said this (to himself):

Surā (Wine)—a corruption of Sarain or the Caspian Sea forming the south-eastern boundary of Kuśadvīpa; (4) *Ghṛta*—derived from the Erythraean Sea or the Persian Gulf forming the boundary of Śālmalidvīpa or Chaldia, i.e. Assyria; (5) *Ikṣu* (sugar cane) a variant of the Oxus. The river is taken as a sea (cf. Sindhu means both the sea and the river). It forms the southern boundary of Puṣkaradvīpa or Bhushkara i.e. Bokhara. (6) *Dadhi* (curds) is a hyper Sanskritisation of Dahi (Dahae)—a scythian tribe living in the upper Jaxartes on the shore of the Aral Sea. Hence *Dadhi* is the Aral Sea. (7) *Svādu* (sweet water)—a corruption of Tchandun, a river in Mongolia i.e. Plakṣadvīpa. These identifications are still controversial. Vide—Baladeva Upadhyaya—*Purāṇa Vimarśa* pp. 317-331. D.C. Sircar—*Studies in GAMI* pp. 17-25.

37. "Alas ! What a (terrific) iniquity has been perpetrated by me ! I have allowed myself to be pushed by my senses into the dark terrible pit of sensual objects produced by Avidyā. Now enough of this. Fie upon me who became a beast of recreation (i.e. monkey) to this woman" Thus he censured himself.

38. He regained his power of discretion and thinking, by the grace of Hari, the Supreme Deity. (Hence) he divided the earth proportionately among his dutiful sons (as per injunctions of the Dharma Śāstra). He abandoned, like a dead body, his queen with whom he enjoyed pleasures, renounced his great imperial wealth and grandeur. By the power generated by the realization of the stories and pastimes of Hari, he became disgusted (with *Saṁsāra*) in his heart, and he followed again the spiritual path shown to him by the divine sage Nārada.

These are verily the verses composed of old to eulogize the glory of Priyavrata:

39. Who else than the Lord Himself can perform the great achievements of Priyavrata who, while dispelling the darkness (of the night by riding in his refulgent chariot), created seven oceans by the deep tracks of fellies of his chariot.

40. For the happiness and convenience of beings he divided the earth (in seven island-continents). He fixed the boundaries (in each *dvīpa*) by means of rivers, mountains and forests.

41. Devotees of Lord Viṣṇu were dear to him. He regarded as hellish, the glories and affluence acquired in the Pātāla (subterranean world), the celestial world and the human world as well, through powers of *karma-yoga*.

CHAPTER TWO

(The History of Agnīdhra)

Śrī Śuka said :

1. When his father (Priyavrata) was thus absorbed (in the *yoga* of devotion as advised by Nārada), Agnīdhra, who abided by his (father's) commands, kept the injunctions of Dharma in view, and accordingly protected properly his subjects, the inhabitants of Jambūdvīpa, like his own children.

2. Once upon a time, he, being desirous of attaining to *Pitṛloka* (the region of manes, by having a son), went to perform penance in the valley of mount Mandāra which was the sporting ground of beautiful celestial damsels. He collected all the articles required for worship, and with concentrated mind, he propitiated the venerable Brahmā, the lord of the progenitors of the universe.

3. Having understood his intention, the glorious First-born god Brahmā, deputed to him a celestial damsel called Pūrvacitti who was a singer in his assembly.

4. And leisurely did she stroll to the garden adjacent to Agnīdhra's hermitage. The garden appeared extremely beautiful with its lotus-ponds of crystal-clear water, which were resounded with the variegated sweet warblings of acquatic birds like water fowls *Kāraṇḍavas* (a kind of duck), swans etc. And the water-birds were (in their turn) aroused by the resounding melodious notes of the pairs of herbacious and terrestrial birds, perching on golden creepers which entertwined the mass of branches of densely grown forest trees of various kinds.

5. The Prince caught up the sound of the beautiful anklets jingling at every step she wove in a charming, amorous pattern in her graceful advance. He slightly opened the pair of his lotus-bud-like eyes which were till now closed in religious meditation, and perceived her closely.

6. Like a female bee (kissing a flower), the heavenly nymph was enjoying the sweet smell of flowers not far from him. She was making room for the god of Love (the flower-weaponed god) in the minds of men by her gait, sportiveness, bashful and modest glances, sweet voice and charming limbs which profusely delighted the minds and eyes of gods and men (alike).

Her full (pitcher-like) breasts, braids of hair and girdle were slightly agitated by her quickened steps out of fear, when she was assailed by a swarm of bees blind and inebriated with the fragrance of her breath (in the form) of words which dropped from her mouth, and which being accompanied with a smile, were sweet like nectar and intoxicating like wine. Agnīdhra fell under the strong influence of the god of love (with a crocodile on his banner), who got an opportunity to enter his heart the very moment he saw her, and like a stupid[169] fellow, he addressed her (as follows):

7. "Oh great sage ! Who are you and what do you propose to do on this hill ? Are you some indescribable power of the worshipful, Supreme Deity ? Oh friend ! Do you carry a pair of stringless bows (namely your eyebrows) for your purpose, or do you hunt after careless uncautious beasts (like me who are not self-controlled) ?

8. (Referring to her amorous side-glances). These two arrows of your glorious self are winged with lotus-petals (in the form of your eyes). They are gentle, beautiful without feathers, yet of extremely sharp teeth (points). We do not know at whom you wish to aim them in this jungle. May your valour be for the good of dull-witted persons like us.

9. (Referring to the black bees moving about her due to the fragrance of her body). These disciples of your worship are reciting (Vedic hymns) around you, and by incessantly singing the Sama verses with a full understanding of its mystic doctrine they are glorifying the Lord. Just as all sages eagerly resort to their particular (traditional) branch of the Vedas, all these (black bees) eagerly resort to the showers of flowers that are dropped down on all sides from your braid of hair.

10. (Listening to the jingling of the anklets). Oh Brahman ! We can hear only the sweet notes of the *tittira* birds which are encaged (in your anklets), but their form is not visible. Whence did you get the Kadamba-flower-like splendour (of the garment), round your hips which are engirdled by a fire-like shining zone.

11. (Referring to her full conical breasts). Oh Brāhmaṇa

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169. He is called stupid as he failed to distinguish betwean a man and a woman, and addressed the nymph as if she was a man.

(twice-born one) ! What is stored in your beautiful horns which you carry (with difficulty on your bosom), despite your slender waist, and on which my eyesight is firmly resting ? The saffron—coloured fragrant paste applied to your horn is such as has filled my hermitage with sweet smell, Oh beautiful one.

12. Oh best friend ! Please show me your region, the inhabitants whereof bear on their bosom such wonderful pair of limbs which (delight yet) agitate the minds of ascetics like us, and who have on their countenance such a wonderful treasure of sweet words, amorous gestures, nectar and the like.

13. (Pointing to the betel leaves which she was chewing) What is the food on which you subsist? By eating (chewing) that there blows forth a fragrance like that of an oblation offered into the sacrificial fire, Oh dear friend. You are a part (*aṁśa* or *kalā*) of god Viṣṇu, for like Him, there are (ear-rings with) two unwinking crocodiles in your ears. Your countenance is like a lake with its bewildered eyes which are a pair of fish in agitation; with your rows of teeth appearing beautiful like a row of swans and with the mass of curly hair like swarms of black bees moving about you.

14. This ball which, when hit by your lotuslike hands' moves about in all directions, makes my eyes roll about. You are not aware of the loosened braids of your curly hair. Alas ! The dissolute wind, addicted to licentious pleasure, is taking off your lower garment.

15. Oh ascetic (rich in penance) ! Your beauty wrecks the penance of those who are engaged in austerities. By what kind of penance did you secure it (your beauty) ? My friend ! (Come on) You should perform penance in my company. Or it may be that god Brahmā (who desires to extend creation), has been verily pleased with me (and has sent you to me).

16. I shall not let you go, my beloved, who are conferred on me by god Brahmā. Neither my mind nor even my sight, fixed on you as they are, would like to depart. Oh friend with beautiful horns, be pleased to take (lead) me, your devoted servant, wherever you like. May your faithful companions follow me (Or, may the female deer which are the companions in the forest go by the right side—as an auspicious omen".

Śrī Śuka said:

17. In this way, Prince Agnīdhra who was highly expert in the art of courting beautiful ladies and was blest with god-like intelligence, thoroughly propitiated the celestial damsel in a language which cleverly expressed his intention.

18. And she whose heart became strongly atttached to him on account of the intelligence, noble character, beauty, youth, splendour and liberality of that prominent hero (lit. the lord of warriors), enjoyed in the company of the lord of Jambūdvīpa, earthly and heavenly enjoyment for a pretty long time (lit. a period of a myriad of myriad years.)

19. The great king Agnīdhra, they said, got by her nine sons by name Nābhi, Kimpuruṣa, Harivarṣa, Ilāvṛta, Ramyaka, Hiraṇmaya, Kuru, Bhadrāśva, Ketumāla.

20. Having given birth to nine sons, one per year, and leaving them in the palace, Pūrvacitti again rejoined her service with god Brahmā.

21. Those sons of Agnīdhra, from their birth, inherited well-built body and (enormous) strength by the grace of their (heavenly) mother. When the patrimony was duly divided among them by their father, they enjoyed severally (kingship of) the different divisions of Jambūdvīpa which were also named after them[170].

22. King Agnīdhra was not still satisfied with enjoyment of pleasures. Everyday he brooded over nothing else but that celestial damsel. By performance of acts prescribed in the Vedas, he attained the same region as hers—a region where departed forefathers enjoy themselves.

23. On the demise of their father, the nine brothers married the nine daughters of Meru, whose names were Merudevī, Pratirūpā, Ugradaṁṣṭrī, Latā, Ramyā, Śyāmā, Nārī, Bhadrā, Devavītī.

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170. VR. notes that Bhāratavarṣa is later named after king Bharata. Previously it was known as Ajanābha, after king Nābhi.

CHAPTER THREE

(The History of Nābhi—Incarnation of Ṛṣabha)

Śrī Śuka said :

1. Being desirous of progeny, Nābhi, along with childless Merudevī[171], worshipped the venerable Lord of Sacrifices, with concentrated mind.

2. Although the Lord of charming personality is difficult to be attained to by the use and accomplishments of all the means of sacrifices such as wealth, suitable place, time, appropriate *Mantras* (incantations), competent sacrificial priests, and payment of liberal sacrificial fees he is affectionate to his devotees. Hence, when he (king Nābhi) was devoutly and with pure heart, performing the sacrifice, his (the Lord's) heart became eager to accomplish the object desired by his devotee. Although his charming personality is absolutely independent, he manifested his form with beautiful limbs, ravishing the mind and sight, at the time of conducting the *Pravargyas* (the ceremony preliminary to the Soma Sacrifice).

3. And lo ! The Supreme Lord appeared as a self-refulgent personality with two pairs of arms. He was clad in tawny coloured silk garment. He had the splendid *Śrī-vatsa* mark on his chest. He was characteristically distinct by the great conch (Pāñcajanya), lotus, Vanamālā (a garland of forest flowers), discus, the immortal jewel Kaustubha, mace and others. At this the priests officiating at the sacrifices, the directors of the sacrifice and the sacrificer waited upon him very respectfully with *arghya* offering water to wash the guest's hands. They received him bending down their heads respectfully, just as poverty-stricken persons would do when receiving a rich treasure-trove.

The Sacrificial Priests said:

4. "Oh most adorable (God)! (Even though you are perfect in every respect) you be pleased to accept of your own accord, the worship offered (to you) by us, your servants.

171. Marudēvī in Jaina tradition (Hemacandra's *Triṣaṣṭi Śalākā Puruṣa Carita* (TSPC).

We are unable to praise you as your form is incomprehensible. Hence we are taught by the saintly persons to express our obeisance to you again and again. You transcend Prakṛti and Puruṣa. What man, whose mind is absorbed in *saṁsāra*, the product of the *guṇas of Prakṛti* and hence incapable, can describe fully the nature of the Supreme Ruler of *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa* by means of name, form or colour belonging to modern gross creation called *saṁsāra* which can hardly touch you).

5. One cannot do anything more than to extol only, a part of those multitudes of the excellent and the most auspicious attributes which destroy the sins of all human beings.

6. You are thoroughly pleased indeed, Oh Supreme One, through worship offered to you lovingly, by Your followers—worship consisting of water, pure white shoots, tender *Tulasī* leaves and sprouts of *dūrvā* grass, and accompanied by sincere prayer in faltering tone.

7. We do not see if you have to achieve any covetable object of yours through this elaborate sacrifice enriched with a number of component parts (formal rites).

8. You are the highest bliss, the embodiment of all the mutually complementary *Puruṣārthas* (highest objectives in human life) which flow from yourself uninterruptedly, directly and to an unlimited extent. But Oh Lord, this sacrifice signifies as merely (an inadequate) means of propitiating you in the case of us who covet blessings (of *Puruṣārthas*.)

9. Oh Supreme Person ! You are superior to supreme gods (like Brahmā). We are ignorant. We by ourselves do not know what is our highest good. Nor have we worshipped you properly (with due formalities). But just as others (philosophic teachers approach the laity for enlightening them, even though not duly received), out of your exceedingly profuse compassion, you reveal yourself here to us and bestow upon us your glory known as Final Liberation as well as the objects coveted by us.

10. However, (the very fact) that you have now manifested yourself to the vision of your own people (devotees), at the sacrifice of the royal sage (Nābhi), is itself a veritable boon, Oh most worshipful God, the foremost among those who confer boons !

11. Oh Lord ! The description of the host of your excellent attributes is a source of the highest auspiciousness even to sages who have completely burnt down their impurities by the fire of knowledge intensified by non-attachment, and have consequently become similar to you in nature, and enjoy themselves in their Self. (But even such sages have not visualized you). Hence your excellent virtues are continuously (and repeatedly) sung by them.

12. (Though we have been favoured with your audience, we seek one boon of you. May your names descriptive of your excellent qualities and annihilating all sins, be ever uttered by us (lit. be within the range of our speech), even when we are unable to remember you, while stumbling, hunger-stricken, falling, yawning and in wretched conditions and even when attacked by fever and at the moment of death as well.

13. Moreover, this royal sage is desirous of progeny. He looks upon progeny as a covetable object in human life. He covets to have progeny like you. Hence, like a beggar approaching Kubera, the Lord of Wealth—for obtaining mere husk, he beseeches you, the Lord who are competent to give all blessings including pleasures in Heaven and Final Beatitude.

14. Is there any such person in this world who has not waited upon the feet of the high-souled ones and still is not overcome by your invincible Māyā of inscrutable ways and whose intellect and understanding has not been clouded by her and whose nature has not been overwhelmed by the vehemence of the poison in the form of sense objects of pleasure ?

15. You have been invited here for an insignificant object. This act of ours who are dull-witted enough to regard progeny as the highest object in human life, is really an insult to you who are the Lord of unlimited achievements. Be pleased, Oh God of gods, to forgive us all who are ignorant ones as you are equal (in kindness) to all."

Śrī Śuka said :

16. The glorious Lord Viṣṇu was thus being praised in a hymn composed in prose. The feet of that foremost of gods were bowed to by the priests who were (in their turn) paid obeisance by (king Nābhi), the ruler of a sub-continent

(which later became famous as Bhārata-varṣa). He (the Lord) spoke graciously as follows :

The Lord said :

17. "Oh sages ! It is admirable that a very embarrassing and difficult boon viz. the son of this (king) should be like unto me, has been sought from me by you whose words are not futile and ineffective. For being matchless (one without a second), I alone am similar to me. Nevertheless, the words of Brāhmaṇas should not prove untrue inasmuch as it is my own mouth that is represented by the race of Brāhmaṇas who are like gods among the twice-born ones.

18. Therefore, no compeer to me being available, I shall exhibit a part of mine by incarnating (on the earth) through (king Nābhi), the son of Agnīdhra."

Śrī Śuka said :

19. Within the hearing of queen Merudevī the Lord addressed this to her consort and disappeared.

20. Oh king Viṣṇudatta[172] (Parīkṣit) ! The glorious Lord who was thus propitiated by the great sages in that very sacrifice, and who desired to oblige the monarch, descended as the son of Merudevī in the king's harem. He assumed a white (pure, *Sāttvic*) personality with a view to demonstrating to the world the sacred vows to be observed by (nude *Śramaṇas*) or recluses clad with air, performing austerities with a pledge to observe life-long celibacy[172a].

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172. So called because he was restored to life by Kṛṣṇa—vide *supra* 1.12, 7·10.

172a. This obviously refers to Digambara Jaina sages despite ŚR.

CHAPTER FOUR

(The miraculous history of Ṛṣabha)

Śrī Śuka said :

1. It is reported that after the incarnation, Lord Ṛṣabha had all the characteristic marks of the Supreme Lord (such as the marks of thunderbolt, goad etc.) manifest (on the soles of his feet), from his very birth. His majestic splendour was everyday enhanced by qualities like impartiality and equality towards all, control of internal and external senses, non-attachment to sense-pleasures, domination and control over all beings, and possession of great spiritual powers. The king's counsellors, subjects, god-like Brāhmaṇas very eagerly wished to have him as the protector of the earth.

2. On account of his Supreme-most personality which was extolled in laudatory verses by poets, his abundant vigour, physical strength, splendour, glory, dominance and valour, his father significantly named him Ṛṣabha (the most excellent).

3. The mighty Indra became jealous of him, and did not rain in his continent (Ajanābha, later known as Bhāratavarṣa). When apprised of it, Ṛṣabhadeva, the Master of yoga pooh-poohed it with a laughter, and profusely showered rains over his *Varṣa* (continent) called Ajanābha, by his mystic (yogic) power.

4. Being blessed with a worthy child as desired by him, Nābhi was transported with rapturous joy, and affectionately fondled the glorious Lord, the most ancient Person who, of his own free will had assumed a human form. His (Nābhi's) mind was overpowered with Māyā. He fondly caressed him with faltering words choked with emotion : 'Oh child, my daddie' and felt exceedingly happy.

5. King Nābhi who regarded the mandate of the public as authoritative, came to know the love and loyalty of all, from common man to the minister (commanded by Ṛṣabha), installed his son for the protection and preservation of the boundaries (standards) of religious conduct. Having entrusted him to the care of Brāhmaṇas[178] he, accompanied by Merudevī,

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179. According to Jinasena, Nābhi installed Ṛṣabha as an emperor when he was grown up and married. MPS (*Tri-ṣaṣṭi-lakṣaṇa Śrī Mahā Purāṇa —Saṅgraha*—K.B. Nitwe, Ed. 1899) 16.92.

retreated to Viśālā (Badarikāśrama), where he propitiated the venerable Lord Vāsudeva (alternatively) known as Nara and Nārāyaṇa, through severe penance which caused no trouble to others, and through the *yoga* of profound meditation. In due course, he attained to his greatness, viz., the state of *jīvanmukta* (being liberated while alive).

Oh descendant of Pāṇḍavas (king Parīkṣit) ! The two following verses are sung in his (Nābhi's) praise :

6. What other man can perform the righteous deed as done by the royal sage Nābhi, due to the purity and piety of which act, Hari became his child ?

7. Who else than Nābhi could be so devoted to Brāhmaṇas, who, being propitiated by sacrificial fees, by their spiritual power, made the Lord of Sacrifice manifest himself (to him) in his sacrifice ?

8. After his coronation, Lord Ṛṣabha-deva regarded his own continent as *Karma-kṣetra*[174] (a land fit to perform acts leading to the Heaven and Liberation), and showed (the model of life) how one should stay in the preceptor's house (for education). He obtained the permission (to enter householder's life) from his preceptors who were given boons (as fees) of their choice. For teaching the duties of a householder's life he married Jayantī[175] who was given (in marriage) by Indra. He performed both types of duties as prescribed in the scriptures (of *Śrutis* and *Smṛtis*). He begot through her (queen Jayantī) one hundred sons who were like unto him.[176]

9. Out of those (sons), the eldest was the great *yogī*, Bharata, who was endowed with highly excellent attributes. It is on account of him that this continent came to be called Bhārata[177].

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174. Jinasena interprets *karma-bhūmi* as a country in which the order of Agriculture and other six ways of livelihood had been fixed by Ṛṣabha (MPS 16.249).

175 According to Jinasena, he married Yaśasvatī and Sunandā with the consent of Indra. These two were the Princesses of Kaccha and Mahākaccha (MPS. 15, 69, 70).

176. Jain tradition confirms the number of sons as 100, but the names are different (MPS. 16.4).

177. Jain tradition endorses this derivation :

tat. nāmnā Bhāratam Varṣam
iti hāsīj janāspadam /

MPS. 15.59.

10. After him were born nine sons viz. Kuśāvarta, Ilāvarta, Brahmāvarta, Malaya, Ketu, Bhadrasena, Indra-spṛś, Vidarbha and Kīkaṭa—these were the leaders of (other) ninety (sons).

11-12. Kavi, Hari, Antarīkṣa, Prabuddha, Pippalāyana, Āvis, Hotra, Drumila, Camasa and Karabhājana—these nine who demonstrated to the world, the sacred duties of votaries of the Lord, were themselves eminent devotees of the glorious Lord. We shall describe to you later on (in Skandha XI) their pious life imbued with the glory of the Lord, and leading a fund of tranquility, in the dialogue of Vasudeva and Nārada.

13. The eightyone younger sons of Jayantī who were obedient to their father, and of great modesty, profound scholars of the Vedic lore, habitual performers of sacrifice and of extremely pious deeds, became Brāhmaṇas (i.e. were given to meditation on Brahman).

14. The venerable Lord called Ṛṣabha was completely self-dependent. By his nature, he was eternally free from evils. He enjoyed absolute joy. Though he was the Ruler of the universe (God himself), he performed actions as if he were the opposite (an ordinary human being). He taught the ignorant by his behaviour, the traditional righteous duties. He was equal and impartial, friendly and merciful. He laid down the rules of conduct to people in the householder's stage of life, by his achievement of righteousness, wealth, fame, progeny, (earthly) joy and liberation.

15. Whatever is done by the heads (the leading persons) is followed by the world.[178]

16. Even though he knew for himself the confidential, esoteric Vedic lore containing the religious duties of all (people), he governed the people by expedients called *sāma*, (conciliation) *dāna* (gift or, bribery), *daṇḍa* (punishment), *bheda* (sowing discords) as advised by Brāhmaṇas.

17. As per counsels of Brāhmaṇas, he worshipped the Lord by performing for a hundred times, sacrifices, each provided with all the requisites with reference to the materials,

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178. *Yad yad ācarati śreṣṭho . . . . lokastad anuvartate*/ BG. 3.21.

place, time, age (of the sacrificer), faith, (proper) sacrificial priests, and the several gods to be invited.

18. While Lord Ṛṣabha was protecting this continent (Bhārata-varṣa), no man, at any time, desired or expected anything whatsoever from anybody else, as if it was non-existent (and hence beyond desire or expectation); nor did he cast a wistful glance at another's possession—except the ever-increasing intense love for their Lord.

19. Once upon a time, while touring (through his kingdom) Lord Ṛṣabha came to Brahmāvarta.

With a view to admonishing his sons in that conference of great and prominent Brāhmaṇa sages, he spoke thus to his sons even though they had their minds controlled, and their conduct governed by affection and modesty—he did so, within the sight and hearing of his subjects.

CHAPTER FIVE

(Ṛṣabha's discourse on the Path of Liberation)

Ṛṣabha said :

1. (My) dear sons ! This human body in the world of embodied beings, does not deserve to be devoted to pleasures which lead to misery, and which are fit for animals (like dogs and swine) feeding on excrement. It is fit for penance devoted to the realization of the Lord, and which purifies the mind; and pure mind leads to the infinite bliss of absorption into Brahman.

2. The wise say that service rendered to the great is the gate to final liberation, while association with those who are attached to women, is the entrance to hell (or *saṁsāra*). They are (really), the great who are of balanced mind, serene and composed, free from anger, friendly and righteous.

3. They (only are the great) who regard love unto me as the highest objective of human life, and who entertain no liking for people who are engrossed in maintaining their bodies

only, and have no attraction to houses (householder's life) and are devoid of desire for anything beyond the bare necessities of life (lit. maintenance of the body).

4. When one attempts to gratify one's senses (with their objects of pleasure), one certainly (loses discretion and) becomes wreckless, and commits sins only. I do not approve of (the repetition of) such (sinful) acts which (having been perpetrated in the previous existence) caused the body which, though really (unreal and) transitory, became a source of trouble to the Soul.

5. So long as one does not enquire into the real nature of the soul, it remains obscure[179] due to ignorance[180]. So long as the actions (*karmas*) are being performed, the mind persists in its disposition to activity (*karmas*) and a mind so disposed binds down the Soul to the body.

6. In this way, while (the real nature of) the Soul remains obscured by *avidyā* (nescience), the previous *karmas* (of man) tend his mind to perform more activities. He is not liberated from the bonds of the body, so long as he does not entertain love and devotion to me (Vāsudeva).

7. When one (the *jīva*) becomes careless about one's own interest, and even though possessing the power of discrimination does not realise the activities and functions of organs of sense as unreal and unconnected with him, he fails to bear in mind his real nature. Ignorant as he is, he gets into a householder's life (lit. a home with the provision of sexual enjoyment) and undergoes misery (of three types) therein.

8. They (the learned ones) call this stage of matrimonial union of a man with a women as the knot of their mutual hearts which reciprocally binds them. (This is in addition to the knot of the identification of their body with the Soul,—the knot which exists already in their individual hearts. It is this marital knot that deludes a man to regard the house,

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179. *Parābhavaḥ*—The real nature of the soul is dominated over by the body.—ŚR. (2) Is dependent on *karma* (VC., VD.). (3) Misery. —VS. (4) Involved in *Saṁsāra* characterised by the recurrence of birth and death (SD.).

180. Cf. *Jñānāgniḥ sarva-karmāṇi bhasmasāt kurute*/BG. 4.37.

landed property, sons, relatives and wealth as being himself or his own.

9. When this strong knot of the heart, viz., the mind which continues to be hard by the past *karmas* (of the *jīva*), becomes loose, (then alone) a man becomes absolved of the (deluding) man-wife relation. He (then) shakes off *ahaṁkāra* (ego, the cause of the bondage), becomes free, and attains to the highest position, viz., *Mokṣa*.

10. Through devotion to me, the pure Self and preceptor; through service unto me; through freedom from thirst (for worldly enjoyment), by endurance of the pairs of opposite states like pleasure and pain; through understanding that the life of *jīva* is subject to miseries everywhere (even in the other world); through an enquiring spirit (into the nature of the truth); through penance and abstention from *karmas* (performed) for attainment of desires:

11. By actions done for my sake; by (listening to and recounting) my stories all the time; through association with persons who regard me as the only Deity; only by glorifying my excellent attributes; through freedom from the feeling of enmity, by impartiality and evenmindedness, through tranquillity and self-restraint; and through a desire (and attempt) to dispel the (false) notion of the identity of the Self with the body, house (property etc.), Oh sons.

12. Through proper studies in the scriptures dealing with the Soul (*ātman*); by living in seclusion; through control of breath, senses, organs and the mind; through absolute faith in the truth (or scriptures and the word of saintly people); through observance of strict celibacy; through eternal vigilance in performance of sacred duties; through control of speech (for abstention from studying the false doctrines and for observing silence).

13. Through clearsightedness realizing my presence everywhere, through wisdom illumined with Śāstric knowledge and experience; by means of deep concentration, a clever man, endowed with courage, perseverance and discrimination should strive to get rid of the subtle body, the limiting condition known as ego (*ahaṁkāra*).

14. One should always remain vigilant and by the

means, as taught (by the *śāstras* or the preceptor) should completely cut asunder the bondage in the form of the knot (of (*ahaṁkāra*) in the heart which has been caused by Nescience (*avidyā*); for that (knot) is the reservoir of all (previous) *karmas*. Having done so, he may cease to adopt these means.

15. A king, a teacher or a father who desires to attain to my region or regards my grace as the highest object in life, should thus instruct his subjects, pupils or sons who are ignorant of the Truth. (If they do not abide by his teaching) he should not get angry with them. Deluded as they are with the path of *karma* (as the path of real happiness), he should not direct them to perform *karmas*. What[181] advantage would a man reap by misdirecting the blind (i.e. ignorant ones to perform action (*karmas*) with a desire to get their fruit) and make them fall into the abyss (*of saṁsāra*).

16. People (involved in *saṁsāra*) have no insight (to know) in what lies their own (real) good. (Hence) they, being overwhelmed with (a powerful) lust for enjoyment of pleasures, desire for objects of sensual enjoyment. They entertain enmity with each other, for a particle of (insignificant pleasure). Deluded as they are, they have no idea of the unending misery (as a result of such hostility).

17. Seeing an ignorant person steeped in Nescience, what learned and compassionate person who himself knows the Truth, will misdirect him to the wrong path, just as one does not lead astray a blind man who has missed his way.

18. He who would not, or is incompetent to, liberate a person (whether he/she be a pupil, relative, an offspring or a wife or a devotee) from involvment in *saṁsāra*, is not a real preceptor (even though he may claim to be so) or a real relative, father or mother or husband or a deity. [ŚR. followed by VC., SD., GD. and BP. explains the implication as follows : If a preceptor would not or is incapable of leading his pupil to Liberation, he should not claim preceptorship and accept anyone as his pupil, and the pupil should disown such a teacher and leave him. Similarly, a man should not procreate a child or a mother should not accept one in her womb if he or she

181. VR. offers no comment on this line, presumably due to the deletion of the line *kam* ..... *garte* in his text of the Bh. P.

is incompetent to guide the child to Salvation. There is no sin in disowning such a father or mother as was done by Prahlāda in the case of his father and Bharata about his mother Kaikeyī. Such a deity is not a real deity and should not accept worship from a devotee and the devotee should ignore such a deity as was done by Khaṭvāṅga].

19. This body of mine (which, by my free will, appears human in form) is beyond comprehension (as I am not an ordinary human being). For my heart is definitely pure unalloyed *sattva* wherein abides righteousness (*dharma*). Since non-righteousness has been already expelled by me far behind, the noble ones call me Ṛṣabha (the most excellent).

20. All of you are born from my heart (which comprises of nothing but pure *sattva*). You should, therefore, without entertaining any jealousy, serve your brother, the noble-minded Bharata. That will render service unto me and will be (the real execution of duty of) protecting the subjects.[182]

21. Among the (animate and inanimate) created beings, creepers (which spread by themselves) are extremely superior. Higher than these (creepers) are reptiles (and other mobile creatures like insects) which can move from place to place; better than these are beasts which are gifted with intelligence; superior to them are the human beings; higher than men are *pramathas* (goblins, spirits) to whom are superior Gandharvas (celestial singers) and Siddhas (a demi-god tribe endowed with supernatural power); higher than these are followers of gods (such as Kinnaras).

22. Higher than these are Asuras (demons) to whom gods, whose leader is Indra, are superior; greater than these are Dakṣa and other sons of god Brahmā; among them Bhava (Lord Śiva) is the greatest. Brahmā is superior to god Śiva whose power or birth is derived from Brahmā; I am superior to him (Brahmā, and I regard Brāhmaṇas adorable as my own God.

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182. VJ. thinks that this is an exhortation to serve Hari. He interprets: You should sincerely resort to Hari who is mightier than the mighty, loves to support the subjects and is the shelter of all. Through your loving devotion to me, Liberation is just on the palm of your hand. Bharata to whom you serve will be serving me who abide in the subjects whom he protects.

23. Oh Brāhmaṇas ! As I do not regard any other being as comparable equal to Brāhmaṇas, I cannot see any being superior to them. I do not enjoy the oblations offered to the sacrificial fire with that much relish, as I enjoy to the full, the food liberally offered by men to these Brāhmaṇas with faith.

24. It is the Brāhmaṇas who have maintained in this world my glorious, ancient, eternal body (the Vedas). In them are found the eight great excellences such as) most sanctifying *sattva*, tranquillity of the mind, control of senses, Truthfulness, grace, asceticism, the spirit of endurance and knowledge of the reality. (Who can be then superior to Brāhmaṇas?).

25. Though destitute of everything, Brāhmaṇas who cherish deep devotion to me seek nothing of me, although I am superior to the Supreme-most god (Brahmā), possess infinite power etc. and am competent to confer heavenly blessings and Liberation (*Mokṣa*). How can they crave for any other blessing (like kingdom etc.)!

26. Oh my sons, at every step, you should look upon all mobile and immobile beings as my place of residence. That alone will be my real worship by you whose mind (sight)is unprejudiced by jealousy etc.

27. My propitiation is therefore the dedication of the activities of the mind, speech, sight and other sense-organs to me. Without such propitiation one shall not be able to free himself from the noose of death in the form of great delusion."

28. The divine Lord whose name was Ṛṣabha and who was the greatest well-wisher of all, exhorted his sons, even though they were well disciplined, as the exhortation was meant for the world as well. Possessor of great power as he was, he exemplified the path. He intended to exemplify the path of the Paramahaṁsas (recluses of the highest order) which is characterised by devotion, knowledge and renunciation, of great sages who are habituated to tranquillity and self-control and who have desisted from the path of *karma*. Having installed on the throne for the protection of the earth, Bharata, the eldest of his hundred sons, who was (himself) a great devotee of the Lord and devoted to the votaries of the Lord as well,

retained the possession only of his body and renounced everything else in the house. With the sky as his clothing, and with scattered dishevelled hair like a madman, he enshrined within himself the Āhavanīya fire, and set out from Brahmāvarta.

29. He took a vow of absolute silence and kept quiet even though spoken to by men. Behaving like a stupid, blind, dumb, deaf person or like a ghost or a mad person, he put an appearance of an Avadhūta (a sage who has renounced all worldly attachments and connections) who has lost all the sense of his body.

30. With his mind remaining unperturbed, he wandered all alone over the world. (While wandering) in cities and towns, mines and hamlets, flower gardens and the habitations at the foot of mountains, military camps and cowpens, settlements of cowherds, caravans, hills and forests, hermitages of sages and such other places wherever he went, on every road he was maltreated by the dregs of human society. He was threatened, belaboured, was urinated over, spat at, pelted with stones, showered with dust, subjected to stinking odours and to words of abuse. Like an elephant harassed by flies, he ignored these, as he never assumed any ego-hood as being his own self or as belonging to him the unreal habitat in the form of the body which is wrongly called real. He was established in his own essential glory, realising both being and non-being.

31. His hands, feet and broad chest were very delicate ; his long and big arms, shoulders and neck, charming face and other limbs of the body were beautifully disposed. His beautiful face was brightened up with a spontaneous smile as he was by nature charming ; he appeared beautiful with his reddish, large and refreshing eyes which were like petals of full blown lotus ; his cheeks, ears, neck and nose were shapely and captivating ; by the superb gracefulness of his face, he made the god of Love enter into the hearts of the damsels of the town ; his face was adorned with profuse ringlets of matted and golden locks of hair overhanging it. His uncared-for body covered with dust (like an *avadhūta*), he appeared to be possessed by a devil.

32. When the Lord found that this world was opposed to his practice of Yoga, he regarded it reprehensible to offer any

resistance to it. He accepted the vow to lead the life like an *ajagara* (python). It was in a lying position that he ate, drank, chewed, passed urine, execrated till his limbs were daubed with faeces.

33. The wind perfumed with the fragrance of his faeces filled with sweet smell the whole country within a radius of ten *yojanas*.

34. Similarly, adopting the mode of life of a bull, deer and a crow, he behaved like a bull, a deer and a crow and drank, ate, chewed, urinated while going, staying, sitting or lying down.

35. In this way Lord Ṛṣabha, the dispenser of Liberation, adopted various modes of life useful for the practices of yoga. He had no environment like a physical body to prevent his mind i.e. power of direct cognition. He realised his highest bliss in all-pervading *ātman* who is Lord Vāsudeva, the inner controller of all beings. He was, by nature, fully possessed of yogic power such as travelling through the space, acquiring the speed of mind, the power of becoming invisible and of entering the body of another, the faculty of seeing objects distant in time and space and such other powers. Oh King, he did not welcome at heart these super-natural powers which came to him unsolicited.

CHAPTER SIX

(Ṛṣabha quits His body)

The King said :

1. The Yogic powers which accrue unsolicited to persons who realise bliss in their Self and who have burnt down the seeds of their *karmas* (leading to future bondage), through the fire of knowledge, inflamed and fanned by yoga, do not lead to miseries. (Then why did Ṛṣabha not like them?)

The sage (Śrī Śuka) said :

2. Your observation is true. But there are some intelligent persons in this world who are not at all prepared to trust

their fickle mind like a wily hunter would do about a deer (even though trapped by him).[183]

It has also been observed thus:

3. One should never form friendship with (i.e. place trust in) the fickle and changeful mind. It is through such (blind) trust in the mind that the penance of Śiva (at the sight of god Viṣṇu in the Mohinī form)[184] or that of great ascetics (like Saubhari[185]) which was accumulated for a long period, was totally lost.

4. Just as a faithless wife would give entry (to her paramours in her husband's house to get him murdered), the mind of a *yogin* who has formed friendship with it, always leaves loopholes to lust and other enemies (like anger, delusion etc.) to enter.

5. What wise man would regard his mind as obedient and trustworthy to him, for it is the mind which is the source of lust, anger, pride, greed, sorrow, delusion, fear and which binds him down with *karmas* ?

6. Though he (Lord Ṛṣabha) was the ornament of all the protective deities of the world, his divine grandeur remained unnoticed due to his strange stupid-like dress, speech and behaviour like an *avadhūta* (an ascetic who has renounced all worldly attachments and connections). He desired to give up his body with a view to instruct the *yogins* in the method of quitting this mortal body. He realised that the Supreme Spirit directly abiding in him was absolutely one with him without a second. Being free from the continuity of the *vāsanās* or effects of past deeds, he became free from his subtle body, shedding off his (conceptual) identification with the *liṅga śarīra* (subtle body).

7. The body of Lord Ṛṣabha who was free and detached from his subtle body, roamed over the world through the semblance of egotism caused by virtue of the unconscious effects of his yogic powers. As willed by Providence, he tra-

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183. Or just as a dealer (merchant) would not trust a deceitful *Kirāta*—ŚR.

184. Vide infra 8.12.24-32

185. Vide infra 9.6.39-52.

versed Koṅka, Veṅka, Kuṭaka and South Karṇāṭaka[186] countries. In the jungle near mount Kuṭaka, he holding a piece of stone in his mouth and with dishevelled hair, wandered like a madman.

8. Then a fearful forest conflagration created by the friction of bamboos tossed by the velocity of winds, burnt down the forest along with his body.

9. Verily, in the Kali Age, when unrighteousness will rule supreme, there will be a foolish king named Arhat, ruling over the territories of Koṅka, Veṅka and Kuṭaka. Learning about the strange way of the life of Ṛṣabha, he will (try to) study and adopt it. As a result of the accumulated sins of the previous life of the people, as fate would have it, he (Arhat) being deluded, will give up the path of his own *dharma* which is free from fear or danger in every way. Out of his whim, he will propagate the wrong, and absurd way of the heretics.

10. By that (propagation of the heretical creed), in the Kali Age, wretched people, being deluded by the Māyā potency (power of delusion) of God, will (neglect and) be devoid of the purity, cleanliness and good conduct enjoined upon them by their scriptural injunctions. With their intelligence stupefied by the Kali Age wherein unrighteousness predominates, they, of their respective individual free will, will adopt wrong and corrupt vows involving contempt of gods, abstention from bath, *ācamana* (sipping of water before religious ceremonies etc.), neglect of cleanliness, plucking out hair (from the head instead of shaving) and such others. They will generally condemn the Vedas, Brāhmaṇas, Lord Viṣṇu (the presiding deity of sacrifices) and the world.

11. Believing in the blind tradition about the new way of life chosen by them but which is unsupported by the Vedas, they of their own accord will fall into dark abysmalhell.

12. This incarnation (of Lord Viṣṇu as Ṛṣabha) was

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186. VR. and VJ. identify Koṅka with Koṅkaṇa, the narrow strip of land between the Western ghats and the Arabian sea. Veṅka is probably Veṅkaṭādri, the Tirupathi hill.

VJ. states: Ṛṣabha travelled from the land irrigated by the Bhīmā and Southern Karṇāṭak a to Saurāṣṭra and thence to the east of Nagpur where near the 'Ūttarā' river there is the Kuṭaka hill. Obviously VJ. is guessing. N. L. De identifies Kuṭaka with Gadag in Dharwar district. GDA. Ml. 112.

intended for instructing people (who are) immersed in the *Rajoguṇa*, in the way of Liberation.

They (people) sing the (following) verses describing Ṛṣabha's excellent qualities:

13. Oh! This sub-continent (Bhāratavarṣa) is the sacredmost in all sub-continents (*Varṣas*) and island-continents (*dvīpas*) of the earth which is engirdled with seven seas; for people hereof sing of the auspicious deeds of Murāri (Lord Viṣṇu, slayer of the demon mura)—deeds associated with his (Viṣṇu's) incarnation.

14. How lucky is the race of Priyavrata of pure and sacred glory! In it (Viṣṇu), the Ancient Person took an incarnation (of Lord Ṛṣabha). The First Personage observed that path of religion which became the cause of Liberation (lit. non-action).

15. Is there any other *yogi* who can even mentally follow the direction of this birthless Lord (Ṛṣabha)? For the yogic powers, to attain which other Yogis strive covetously, were discarded by him as unreal and illusory, even though the powers automatically accrued to him.

16. Thus has been narrated to you the pious (and sanctifying) life of the Lord, by name Ṛṣabha, who was the most venerable to all the Vedas, the worlds (people), gods Brāhmaṇas and cows. It completely cleanses all impious actions of men (who devoutly listen to or recite it). It is the abode of the highest auspiciousness and supreme bliss. He who, with rapt attention and increasing faith, listens to it or recites it to others, unswerving devotion into venerable Vāsudeva is developed in them.

17. It is in *bhakti* (devotion and not in *yoga* etc.) that wise men continuously steep their Soul, tormented as it is with the scorching heat in the form of miseries of the worldly life (*saṁsāra*) full of manifold sins. They do not at all evince any regard or desire for the final beatitude though it is the highest *Puruṣārtha*, (objective in human life), despite its being automatically obtained. For, being worshippers of the Lord, they have ipso facto completely achieved all the *Puruṣārthas* (highest objects of human pursuits).

18. Oh King ! Of you Pāṇḍavas and Yadus; the vene-

rable Lord is the protector, preceptor, the deity to be worshipped, a friend and well-wisher, the controller of your family, and occasionally even a servant (e. g. an ambassador to the Court of Duryodhana). May it be as it is. But Lord Krsna (Mukunda) awards Liberation to his worshippers, but not loving devotion (to him).

19. Salutation to the venerable Lord Ṛṣabha who is free from desires due to his eternal realization of his own Self, and who, out of compassion for the world, explained the fearless nature of the self to the people (or the world) whose mental capacity is lost in sleep (ignorance) for a long time, as it is engrossed in desires of the body and its property.

CHAPTER SEVEN

(*The Life of Bharata*)

Śrī Śuka said:

1. When Bharata, the great devotee of the venerable Lord, was by his volition ordained to protect the earth by Lord Ṛṣabha, he became fully engaged in complying with his will (viz. protection of the world). He married Pañcajanī, the daughter of Viśvarūpa.

2. Just as *Ahaṁkāra* (ego, the source of all *bhūtas*) creates the subtle elements (*tanmātras*), through her he begot five sons who were entirely like himself.

3. (They were:) Sumati, Rāṣṭrabhṛt, Sudarśana, Āvaraṇa and Dhūmraketu. It is after him that this continent (*Varṣa*) which was (erstwhile) called Ajanābha, came to be designated as Bhārata.

4. The Lord of the earth had a wide knowledge, and like his father and grandfather was devoted to his duties (as a king). Like them, with great (filial) love, he protected the subjects who were engaged in their respective duties.

5. He worshipped the venerable Lord who is of the form of *Yajña*[187] and *Kratu* by performing punctually[188] and with

187. A sacrifice conducted without the use of Yūpa or a sacrificial post is Yajña and that with the use of a sacrificial post is a *Kratu*—ŚR.

188. i. e. at the proper time in the morning, at noon and in the evening.

ardent faith, sacrifices, both big and small such as Agnihotra, Darśa, Pūrṇamāsa Cāturmāsya and those performed with the offering of a beast as well as with Soma sacrifices in their completely detailed forms as well as their modifications. Being properly authorised he got them performed through the four classes of sacrificial priests, viz., Hotā, Adhvaryu, Udgātā and Brahmā.

6. While different sacrifices were being performed wherein all the accessory rites and actions were being conducted with meticulous care (by Adhvaryus, with ghee, rice, *puroḍāśa* and other oblations in their hands for offering to the fire) Bharata (the sacrificer) mentally dedicated the entire Apūrva[189] (the prospective transcendental effect) of the fruit of the sacrificial act which is designated as Dharma, to Lord Vāsudeva, the Lord of the sacrifices. He is the doer, as he is the director and controller of deities (lit. objects) of all the Mantras which are symbols of all the gods. In this way, he cleared the impurities (like love, hate) of his mind by his cleverness and wisdom (of dedicating the fruit of sacrifice to Lord). The sacrificer (Bharata) contemplated the gods who partook the offerings from the hands of the Adhvaryus, as resting on the various limbs of the Sacrificial deity (viz. Lord Vāsudeva).

7. In this way, in Bharata's heart, thoroughly purified by such exemplary (faultless) performance of (sacrificial) actions, developed intense devotion which went on increasing

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189. *Apūrva*: (A) Lit. Something new, not known before. It is 'a Force set in motion by the action of sacrifice, this Force being the Direct Instrument whereby, sooner or later, the Action brings about the Result' (G.N. Jha—*Pūrva Mīmāṁsā in its Sources*, p. 231). Jha discusses the details of this (*Apūrva*) theory and the differences between the Prābhākara and Bhāṭṭa Schools of the Mīmāṁsā (ibid., pp. 226-35).

(B). Jhalkikar defines Apūrva as the special potency developed by performance of sacrifice and leading to heaven. (*Yāgādijanyaḥ svargādijanakaḥ Kaścana-guṇa-viśeṣaḥ/Nyāyakośa*, p. 48-49). He further states that *Prārabdha-karma* of Vedāntins, *dharmādharma* of the Nyāya Schools, *adṛṣṭa* of the Vaiśeṣikas and *Puṇya* and *Pāpa* of followers of *Purāṇas* are the same as *apūrva*. Śaṅkara criticises this theory that it is non-spiritual and if God is said to act according to *apūrva*, it becomes identical with the Vedāntic view that God acts with reference to the law of *Karma* (*Śārīra Bhāṣya* 3.2.41).

daily with forceful ardour. The devotion was unto the Supreme Spirit (Brahman) who, within the inner space of Bharata's heart, manifested himself in the form of the Supréme Man, Lord Vāsudeva who was distinguished with the characteristic *Śrī Vatsa*, the *Kaustubha* gem, a garland of forest flowers (*Vana-mālā*), the discus (*Sudarśana*) and the mace (called *Kaumodaki*) and others. Lord Vāsudeva who stays steady (as if drawn in portrait) in the heart of his devotees, stood effulgent in Bharata's mind (as well).

8. In this way he spent one thousand myriad (Ten million) years. Having understood that the time of exhaustion of the fund of his *karmas* (resulting in enjoyment of kingship) had arrived, he proportionately divided the ancestral property and kingdom which was till then enjoyed by him, to his sons. Abandoning his home which was the abode of all kinds of wealth and prosperity, he retired as recluse to the hermitage of Pulaha.[190]

9. They say that, out of affection and grace for his votaries who stay there (at Pulahāśrama), Lord Hari, verily even now manifests himself to his devotees in the form desired by them.

10. That eminently holy river called Cakra-nadī (the Gaṇḍak) hallows all the places in that hermitage with wheel-like circular pebbles with navel-like dimples on both the sides.

11. It is indeed said that in a grove adjacent to Pulaha's hermitage, he performed, all alone, the worship of the Lord with different kinds of flowers, tender leaves of various kinds, especially of the Tulasī-plant and with water, and offered to him (as *naivedya*) bulbous roots, roots and fruits. He ceased to have any desire for objects of senses and cultivated perfect tranquillity of the mind and attained to supreme bliss.

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190. *Pulahāśrama*—ŚR., SD., GD. call it *Harikṣetra*, while VR., VJ., BP. identify it with *Śāla* (*li*) *grāma*. N. L. De locates it somewhere near the source of the Gaṇḍaka. However, he points out that (Jaḍa) Bharata's hermitage was situated on the Kakaveni river on the north of Redigrama and that of Pulaha in the latter village. —GDAMI. 174.

The place is confirmed by *Padma P.* Pātālakhaṇḍa, Ch. 78 and *Brahma Vaivarta*, P. 2.13.

12. By such type of uninterrupted worship of the Supreme Man, his heart melted with the pressure of his increasing love for God and became slack in making any efforts (as if hypnotised); due to ecstatic joy, the hair stood on their end all over his body; his eyes became bedimmed with tears of joy which flowed profusely due to his love and solicitude (to realize the Lord). His consciousness and thought activity was drowned in the deep lakelike heart overflowing with supreme joy due to the increasing intensity of devotion caused by his constant contemplation of the red-lotus-like feet of his beloved Lord. And he forgot (even) the worship of the Lord that he was performing.

13. He had thus undertaken the sacred vow of propitiating the Lord. With the deer-skin for his clothing and with his mass of tawny, curly matted hair, wet on account of his ablution in the morning, noon and evening, Bharata appeared charming. He praised the glorious Lord, the golden (Self-effulgent) Supreme Man manifested in the orb of the rising Sun by means of Ṛgvedic hymns addressed to the Sun, thus :

14.* The light of the Sun-god (the Creator of the universe) which dispenses the fruit of actions, is transcendental to

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* (i) VR. : We take shelter with the brilliantly luminous form of god Viṣṇu—Viṣṇu who is beyond the sphere of Prakṛti and whose knowledge is ever manifesting, eternal and limitless. He created this universe by His Will (-power). He entered again his own creation, along with Jīva, charged with his power (or it is by his Will-power and knowledge that he entered the universe consisting of the sentients and insentients). He sees (protects) the Jīva who hankers after the objects of senses and who enjoys the fruits of his action by his intelligence leading to the miseries of the cycle of births and deaths.

(ii) VJ. : You transcend (i.e. are superior to and beyond) Prakṛti or are free from *rajas*. You are the maker of the world. You have perfect knowledge of everything. Being established by the Vedas, you are the offspring of the Vedas. The Lord created this universe by his mental power. By his power, he entered the universe and stayed there as the controller. You put an end to miseries. You are the Lord of all *jīvas* who are full of cravings (of all kinds). We eulogize you.

(iii) SD. : This verse elucidates the meaning of Gāyatrī. The main idea is: "Lord Vāsudeva is the creator of the universe. To his brilliantly shining golden form, we take shelter."

Prakṛti (lit. is beyond *rajas*, is purely *Sāttvic* unalloyed with *rajas* and *tamas*). It created this (phenomenal universe) by its will (power) only, and having entered it (as the *antaryāmin*—the Inner Controller), it protects, by its intellectual capacity, the *jīva* who seeks its help. We resort to that light which actuates our intellect.[191]

CHAPTER EIGHT

(*Bharata reborn as a deer*)

1. Once upon a time, after finishing the necessary (bodily) acts (e.g. urination), Bharata bathed in the great river (the Gaṇḍakī) and completed his routine of general and special religious duties. He then sat on the bank of the river, repeating the sacred syllable *Om*, for a period of three *muhūrtas*.[192]

2. At that time, Oh King, there approached near the river, a female deer, all alone, to satisfy her thirst.

3. Exactly at that time, while she continued to drink water with avidity, there arose, not far from the place, a terrifically loud cry of a roaring lion, panicking the world.

4. The female deer was timid by nature. Hearing it, with frightened looks, she became panicky at heart, with the

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(iv) GD. : This verse brings out the following characteristics of the Lord :

(1) The creator of the universe; (2) the protector of the world; (3) Being a witness—aloof and above the world; (4) Being the inner controller as follows:

(1) His lustre being identical with the Lord's form created the universe with his mental power. (2) From him does the wealth i. e. the fruit of Karmas, issue. (3) Having re-entered the universe, he, by his *cit-śakti* (intellectual capacity) sees the Jīva hankering after pleasures. (4) He motivates the intellect, organs of senses and vital airs among beings.

191. Cf. also
tat savitur vareṇyam bhargo devasya dhīmahi/
dhiyo yo naḥ-pracodayāt/ RV. 3.62.10.

192. *muhūrta*—a period of 48 minutes.

fear of the lion. With her eyes swimming and thirst unquenched, she suddenly leapt across the river through fear.

5. When the doe which was carrying leapt over, the foetus in her which became dislodged through terrific fear, got discharged from her organ of generation and fell into the river.

6. That devoted female companion of a black antelope was afflicted with exhaustion caused by the abortion, (unusually) long jump and fear (of the lion), she strayed away from her herd, rushed into a cave and fell dead.

7. The royal sage Bharata noticed that the helpless young one of the deer was being carried away by the current. Out of compassion, he picked it up, as it was abandoned by its relatives, and took it to his hermitage, as it was motherless.

8. They say that he developed intense attachment for it, feeling the young deer to be his own. Day by day, he got engrossed in its feeding, protection (from wolves etc.), caressing and pleasing it (with scratching etc.). When he got so fondly attached to it in the course of some days, his daily righteous duties along with *yamas* (moral observances like non violence—*ahiṁsā* etc.), worship of the Supreme Lord and others, became neglected one by one, and soon all of them were abandoned by him.

9. (Bharata said to himself) : "Alas ! What a pity ! This poor unfortunate young deer has, due to the velocity of the rotation of the wheel of Time, been separated from its kith and kin and friends, and has resorted to me as a shelter. It regards me only as its father, mother, brother and relative and as a companion in its herd. Nor does it know anyone else. It has placed its absolute trust in me. I know the gravity of the sin in letting down a person seeking my protection. Hence it is up to me that I, with envy towards none, should look after the feeding, protection, satisfaction and fondling of this young deer which completely depends on me."

10. For certainly, self-restrained and tranquil-minded noble worthies who are friendly to the poor and wretched, disregard even their bigger interests for such (compassionate acts).

11. In this way he felt attachment to it. His heart was

bound down with affection for the fawn while he was sitting, sleeping, wandering, standing, eating and doing such other acts.

12. When he wanted to bring the (blades of) Kuśa grass, flowers, sacrificial sticks, leaves, fruits, roots and water, he went into the forest along with the young one of the deer, as he apprehended danger to the life of the fawn from wolves and dogs.

13. When due to its innocent nature, it became stuck up at various places on the way, he, with his heart overwhelmed with excessive affection, bore it on his shoulder, out of pity for it. In this way, by placing it on his lap, hugging it to his bosom and by fondling it, he derived the highest pleasure.

14. Even during the course of performing his religious duties, he used to rise up frequently at intervals to have a look at it, and with his heart reassured, the Lord of the Bhārata varṣa) continent expressed his blessing with the words, "may you be safe from all sides, my child".

15. On other occasions (when he did not see the fawn), he felt excessively anxious about it like a miser who has lost his wealth. With extreme anxiety and full of tenderness and compassion, his heart was tormented, with the pangs of separation from the fawn. Being overcome with great infatuation and lamenting for the young deer, verily, it is said that he used to lament (lit. express himself) as follows :

16. "Oh ! Is it possible ? Will that pitiable mother-less young one of the deer place its confidence again in me who am, alas ! ignoble, of deceitful and cruel nature like a cunning Kirāta and who have done no meritorious acts ? Will it return (to me) forgetting and forgiving my faults by its inherent goodness and purity of heart like a saintly person ?

17. Shall I be able to see it (again), protected by God, and safely grazing tender leaves of grass in the garden of the hermitage ?

18. (How strongly I wish) that no wolf, or dog or any other gregarious animal (like boar) or solitary wanderer (like a tiger) eats it.

19. The glorious Lord (the Sun), which rises for the weal of the whole world and which is the Soul of the triad of

Vedas (the Ṛg, Yajus and Sāman) is (now) certainly setting. But still the fawn, the charge entrusted to me by the female deer, has not arrived.

20. Would that the princely young deer return and delight me who have done no righteous deed, and remove the anxiety and sorrow of his near and dear ones, by its manifold beautiful, pleasing, sportive fawn-like activities?

21. When in joke, I close my eyes in sham meditation, out of anger resulting from affection, it would approach me hesitatingly with awe. And with the tips of its horns soft like drops of water, it would strike at me.

22. When it is chided by me for polluting (by nibbling) the Kuśa grass on which the sacrificial offerings are placed, it being extremely afraid, immediately desists from its sport (sportiveness) and stays steady without moving its limbs, like a boy-sage with all his senses controlled. Oh! What wonderful penance must have been practised by this fortunate earth!"

23. (After saying the above words, he went out and found the prints of the hooves of the deer and said): "By means of the rows of the imprint of tiny, charming, auspicious-most hoofs of the docile young one of the black-antilope, the earth indicates the track of the treasure-trove (viz. the lost fawn) to me, a wretched person, who am afflicted due to my being deprived of my wealth (the youny deer). And having got herself beautified with those foot-prints, she becomes transformed into a sacrificial place[193] for the twice-born ones (*dvijas*) aspiring after *Svarga* (heaven) and *Mokṣa* (the final beatitude).

24. (Looking at the Moon that has arisen, he imagined that the deer-like spot on the disc of the Moon was his fawn). Maybe that, out of compassion, the glorious Lord of stars who is kind to the poor and afflicted, protects, from the fear of the lion, this fawn whose mother is dead and which has strayed away from its hermitage (shelter).

25. Or it may be that with its cool, soothing and (due to affection) profusely flowing drivel in the form of rays, the

193. ŚR. quotes a Smṛti text to support the sanctifying effect of the foot-prints of black antelopes rendering that place fit for performing sacrifices: *yasmin deśe mṛgaḥ kṛṣṇas tasmin dharmān nibodhata*/Cf. Manu 2.23.

Moon soothes me whose land-lotus-like heart is scorched by the flames of the forest conflagration of the fever (torments) of separation from my child (-like fawn), and who, in search of the fawn, am following the young one of the doe."

26. In this way, the heart of Bharata was overcome with wishes which could not be accomplished. By the force of his own destiny (lit. fruition of his deeds done in previous birth) which appeared in the form of that fawn, Bharata the *Yogī* and the sage, swerved from the yogic practices[194] and his acts for propitiating the glorious Lord. How else there would be such an intense attachment to the young one of a deer—an animal of a different species—in Bharata who formerly considered his own sons—with whom it is so very difficult to part—as veritable impediments in the attainment of Liberation and separated himself from them. In this way, the practice of Yoga, commenced by the royal sage Bharata, got interrupted. He forgot the real nature of the Soul (or himself) while feeding, protecting, pleasing and caressing the young deer. Meanwhile just as a serpent rushes to the hole of a rat, the inevitable time of death, of terrific speed, arrived.

27. Even at that time, he wistfully fixed his glance on the deer which like unto a son was mourning by his side. With his heart fixed on the fawn, he left this world. He did not lose the memory of his previous life along with his dead body, but like other (ordinary *jīvas* with such obsessions at the time of death*) got the body of (birth as) a deer.

28. Even in that life as a deer, by virtue of his (endeavouring at) propitiation of the Lord (in his previous birth) he remembered the cause of his birth as a deer and being greatly tormented with repentance, he said:

29. "Alas! How painful it is! I strayed away from the path of the knowers of the Supreme Self. With great fortitude I divested myself from attachment of every kind and resorted

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194. VR. includes under these the three kinds of *Yoga* viz. *Jñāna-yoga, Karma-yoga* and *Bhakti-yoga* and these are regarded as the three kinds of austerities which Bharata practised.

*Cf. *yaṁ yaṁ vāpi smaran bhāvaṁ tyajatyante kalevaram/ taṁ tam evaiti Kaunteya sadā tad-bhāva-bhāvitaḥ //* —BG. 8.6.

to a secluded sacred forest. Self-controlled as I was, I completely devoted and concentrated my mind on the venerable Lord Vāsudeva who is the (*antaryāmin*) inner controller of all, I utilized fully all the time, every moment of which was devoted with energetic efforts to the listening to the excellences of the Lord, reasoning and pondering over them, extolling his virtues, worshipping him, constantly remembering him. That mind of my ignorant self in a moment flowed (was attracted) to a young one of a deer from far afar".

30. Thus being full of deep remorse, he left his mother-deer. And from Kālañjara[195] hill (his birth place), he returned again to the hermitage of Pulastya-Pulaha at Śālagrāma, a holy place consecrated to the Lord, a place favourite with sages who have attained self-control and serenity of mind.

31. Even there, he waited for the termination of his life (lit. death). He was so terribly disgusted with attachment that he lived all alone. Subsisting on dry leaves, grass and creepers he was counting (his days) for the exhaustion of (his *karma* which was) the cause of his birth as a deer. (Ultimately) he cast off his body of a deer immersing half of it in the sacred waters of the Gaṇḍakī.

CHAPTER NINE

(Bharata, reborn as a Brāhmaṇa, saved by Bhadrakālī)

Śrī Śuka said:

1. Then (after Bharata's quitting his body as a deer, the story of Bharata proceeds as follows).

There lived a certain holy Brāhmaṇa, foremost in the clan of Aṅgiras. He was possessed of self-control and tranquillity of mind. He was noted for his austerities, study of the Vedas, liberal hospitality, contentment, endurance, modesty, knowledge of rituals, non-jealousy, knowledge of the Supreme

195. Kālañjara in the Badausa Sub-division of Banda district-N.L. De—GDAMI. 84.

Self (as being different from the body) and felicity (as a result of righteousness). (From his elder wife) he got nine sons, all similar to him in scholarship, nobility of character, righteous conduct, handsomeness and liberality. From his younger wife was born a twin--a son and a daughter.

2. They say that the male among the twins was Bharata, the great votary of the Lord, the foremost among royal sages. He cast off the body of a deer and as the last incarnation (before final beatitude) was born as a Brāhmaṇa.

3. In this birth also, he was terribly afraid of attachment to his relatives. He specifically contemplated in his mind the pair of the lotus-feet of the glorious Lord who cuts asunder bondage of *Karma* of those who listen to, meditate upon and extol the excellences of the Lord. He remembered the series of his previous incarnations through the grace of the Lord and being apprehensive of his fall (as in his previous life), he presented himself to the world as being an insane, stupid, blind and deaf person.

4. With his heart deeply attached to his son through filial affection, the Brāhmaṇa verily performed all the sacred ceremonies (*Saṁskāras*) up to *Samāvartana*[196] as prescribed in the *Śāstras*. To his son whose *upanayana* ceremony (for investiture of the sacred thread for the beginning of the study of the Vedas) was performed, he taught him well the rules of conduct such as the Śāstric way of personal purity of performing *ācamana* (sipping water before and after meal and while performing *sandhyā* etc.) and other rules of performing sacred duties, even though they were not to the liking of his son; for (according to Śāstric injunctions) a son must be instructed (in the observance of religious duties) by his father.

5. And he (Bharata) also used to behave in the wrong

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196. *Samāvartana* was originally a ceremonial bath after finishing Veda study. It marked the termination of studenthood. Some texts on *dharma Śāstra* regarded it as a subordinate element (*aṅga*) of marriage. The Brāhmaṇa did not want to get the stupid son married. Hence he completed the purificatory ceremonies upto *Samāvartana*. For details of this ceremony vide Kāne *Hist. of Dharma Śāstra*, pp. 402-415.

way,[197] contrary to the instructions[198] (of his father) in his father's presence. The father intended to instruct him in the Vedas (in the month of Śrāvaṇa). But in spite of his continuous instructions during the months of the spring (*Caitra* and *Vaiśākha*), and the months of the summer (*Jyeṣṭha* and *Āṣāḍha*) he could hardly teach the boy the three-footed Solar-hymn (known as *Gāyatrī mantra*), along with *Vyāhṛtis* (the mystic syllables *bhūḥ*, *bhuvaḥ* and *suvaḥ*) with the sacred syllable OM at the beginning.[199]

6. In this way, the Brāhmaṇa's heart was fixed on his son who was his own self. He stuck fast to the false notion that a son must be made learned at all costs. He taught Bharata all the duties of *upakurvāṇa*[200] celibate, viz., cleanliness and purity, Vedic studies, observance of vows, self-discipline, service of the preceptor, worship of the sacrificial fire and others, even though Bharata had no regard for them. But he could not realise his ambition. In the meanwhile, the Brāhmaṇa who, due to his attachment to domestic life, remained negligent (about his spiritual good) was taken away by the ever vigilant death.

7. Having entrusted the twin children that were born from her, to the care of her co-wife, the younger pious wife of the Brāhmaṇa died after him (by immolating herself on his funeral pyre) and attained to the region of her Lord.

8. When the father died, (Bharata's) brothers who were ignorant of his superhuman power and greatness, and who, being (totally) ignorant of the higher knowledge (viz. that

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197. GD.: The word *iva* implies that whatever a knower of Brahman does, is right and true, though it may appear strange to ordinary people.

198. VC. illustrates: He used to take *ācamana* before going for urination and not after. GD. explains: the words *u ha* express wonder at the necessity of compliance to his father's request when Bharata had realized Brahman.

199. i.e. in spite of instruction for four months, Bharata could hardly pronounce the following Gāyatrī Mantra:

Om, bhūr bhuvaḥ suvaḥ tat Savitur vareṇyam /
bhargo devasya dhīmahi, dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt //

200. *upakurvāṇa*—A Brāhmaṇa in a state of pupilage (Brahmacārin) who wishes to pass on to the state of a householder.

of the Self or Brahman), regarded knowledge of the three Vedas (i.e. *karma-kāṇḍa* enjoined therein) as the highest knowledge, thought him to be dull-witted and desisted from their duty of teaching their brother.

9. When he was addressed by ignorant bi-ped brutes (e.g. men) as madman, a stupid or a deaf fellow, he replied to them suitably (according to the implications of the epithets given by them). When he was made to work according to the will of another person, he worked. He used to partake whatever food he got, in return for wages or forced labour (without wages), by way of begging or unsolicited, whether it be little or plenty, savoury or otherwise, but (he never ate) for the gratification of his senses. For he attained the knowledge of his Self which is not the product of any cause but is self-existent, of the nature of extremely pure bliss; and he never identified himself with his body in pleasure or pain caused by pairs of opposites (like heat, cold, respect, disrespect).

10. Stout and muscular as he was, he wandered about barebodied like a bull, in cold (the winter) and heat (the summer), in stormy winds and showers (the rainy season). He lay down on the bare ground to sleep; had not massaged his body (with oil); nor did he ever take a bath. Under the coating of the dirt (so accumulated on his body), his spiritual glory remained unmanifested just as the brilliance of a big gem is obscured by a coating of dust. His loins were covered with a dirty cloth. With his dirty-most sacred thread, he was (contemptuously) ridiculed as 'a nominal Brāhmaṇa', 'an unworhty Brāhmaṇa' (a Brāhmaṇa by caste only), by persons ignorant of his real greatness.

11. When, however, he wished to have food (for his livelihood) in return (as wages) for work, from others, he was employed even by his brothers in farm work, on agricultural farm. He did it but he did not (care to) know whether the ground was level or uneven or whether he worked less or more (in proportion to the wages). He swallowed, as if it were nectar, the broken rice, oil cake, husk, worm-eaten grains (called Kulmāṣa), charred rice sticking to the bottom of the boiling pot (offered as remuneration for work).

12. Now, on one occasion, a certain chieftain of robbers

(of Śūdra caste) desirous of having a child, was about to offer a man as a sacrificial beast to goddess Bhadrakālī.

13. The animal (i.e. the man brought for being sacrificed) providentially escaped. The servants of the chieftain who ran in all directions on the track of the (luckily escaped) victim in (the darkness of) the night, could not catch the 'beast', even at midnight owing to thick darkness. By chance (however) they saw the famous scion of the Aṅgiras family in the Vīrāsana posture guarding the fields against deer, boars and other beasts.

14. Observing him to be of defectless limbs and feeling pretty sure that it will serve their master's purpose thereby, they bound him with a rope and brought him to the temple of the goddess Caṇḍikā (Bhadrakālī), their faces blooming with joy.

15. The Paṇis (robbers) bathed him in their own ritualistic way, covered him with new (unwashed) piece of cloth, decorated him with ornaments, pigments, garlands, a sandal-paste mark on the forehead etc., fed him (to his fill). Taking with them burning incerse, lamps (torches), wreaths of flowers, fried grains, tender shoots and sprouts and offerings of fruits according to their traditional ritual of human sacrifice and in accompaniment of loud music, singing of panegyrics and beating of drums and the musical instrument called *Paṇava*, they made the human (sacrificial) animal sit before the goddess Bhadrakālī.

16. The robber chieftain of the Vṛṣalas (Śūdras) wishing to worship the goddess Bhadrakālī with the wine in the form of human blood of the man sacrificed as a beast, took a very terrible sword charmed with the specific incantation (of Bhadrakālī[201]).

17. The nature of the Vṛṣalas (Śūdras) was dominated by *rajas* and *tamas*. Their minds grew haughty due to the *rajas*, the pride of wealth. In utter disrespect for the family

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201. VD. quotes it as follows :
gṛdhrakarṇi, virūpākṣi, lamba-stani, mahodari /
hana śatruṃ triśūlena kruddhasya piba śoṇitaṃ //
He gives an alternate incantation:
Kāli-kāli, Mahā-kāli etc.

of Brāhmaṇas, (who are) the leaders possessing (and preserving) the Vedas, the rays of the venerable Lord, they strayed wilfully on the wrong (sinful) way and sported in acts of violence (as an amusement). The goddess Bhadrakālī noticed the terrible-most act of immolating the son of a Brāhmaṇa sage who had become one with Brahman, and who was above enmity, and a friend of all beings—the killing of whom is not permissible[202] even in (such an) imminent danger wherein violence is allowed. With her body fiercely scorched with the extremely unbearable Brahmanic lustre, the goddess suddenly exploded forth from the image.

18. In extreme wrath and indignation, her terrible face with her branch-like arched eyebrows thrown up in agitation, her dreadful, curved jaws and the movement of her blood-red eyes, showed that she was as if bent on destroying this world. In terrible rage, she roared forth a thunderous laugh. Springing forward, she cut off the heads of those wicked sinners with that very sword (with which the king was to slay Bharata) and drank to her fill, along with attendants, hot wine of the blood gushing forth from their throats. Intoxicated with over-drinking of that blood-wine, she sang at the topmost pitch of her voice in company of her attendants, and danced and played with the ball-like lopped heads.

19. In this way, verily, a malevolent aggressive black magic to kill the great-souled ones totally rebounds against the exorciser.

20. Oh Viṣṇudatta (King Parīkṣit) ! It is not a great miracle in the case of the great devotees of the Lord who are free from all attachment to the world (*Parama-haṁsas*) that they remain unperturbed even if the calamity of getting beheaded is impending; for they have resolved the formidable knot in their heart—the knot viz., the identification of their Self with their body—and who are well-wishers of all the beings in their heart

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202. VD. quotes an Āgama text prohibiting human sacrifices in general and of a Brāhmaṇa in particular. The quotation from the Black Yajurveda indicating human sacrifice does not involve actual killing as explained by the annotator. A.B. Keith, the translator of the Black Yajurveda, also shows that actual human sacrifices were not current in Vedic times. (*The Religion & Philosophy of the Veda and Upaniṣads*—pp. 347-48).

and are above all enmity. They have resorted to the feet of the Lord and are protected from all sides by the venerable Lord Himself directly, by the ever-vigilant weapon called the discus of Time and through various forms (like Bhadrakālī here).

CHAPTER TEN

(Bharata's Life : King Rahūgaṇa accepts discipleship)

Śrī Śuka said:

(The following incident took place when Rahūgaṇa, a King of Sindhu-Sauvīra, was going to the sage Kapila for instruction in philosophy).

1. One day, while Rahūgaṇa, the King of Sindhu-Sauvīra,[203] was proceeding (to Kapila), the captain of the palanquin-bearers who was in search of a palanquin-bearer, providentially found this excellent Brāhmaṇa (viz. Bharata). (He thought that) this stout, young man of sturdy constitution was fit to carry any load like a bull or a donkey. Bharata was taken perforce along with others who were already so employed to carry on the forced labour without remuneration even though he (Bharata) did not deserve it, that exalted personage carried the palanquin.

2. The gait of the great Brāhmaṇa who (in order to avoid injury to others) walked after carefully looking the ground ahead to the length of arrow, did not conform to that of other men (bearing the palanquin) Rahūgaṇa felt the jolts of the irregular movement of the palanquin. He spoke to the men (palanquin-bearers), "On bearers, walk properly. Why is the vehicle (palanquin) borne so irregularly ?".

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203. *Sindhu-Sauvīra*—Names of two adjacent countries, Sindhu and Sauvīra. Ancient Sauvīra was situated to the east of the lower Indus and included Multan on the north. According to Alberuni, Sauvīra included Multan and Jahrawar. Sindhu lay to the west and Sauvīra to the east of the lower Indus. D.C. Sircar GAMI 33 and 113. For other identification see N.L. De : GDAMI, p. 183.

3. Hearing the taunting words of the master, they, afraid in their minds of the application of the fourth remedy[204] (viz. corporal punishment) to them, humbly submitted to him.

4. "Oh Lord of men ! We are not negligent. We are properly carrying (the palanquin) in complete obedience to your majesty's commands. Though employed just afresh (just now), this (new) fellow does not walk quickly. Hence we are not able to carry the palanquin with him."

5. He (King Rahūgaṇa) realized that the contagious fault (disease) even of one man certainly becomes the fault of all who come in contact with him. Though he had waited upon the elderly (wise) person, his original (Kṣatriya) nature overpowered him. His intelligence was clouded (lit. covered) with *rajo-guṇa*. Getting slightly enraged, he spoke (sarcastically to Bharata) whose Brāhmanic lustre remained unmanifested like fire (covered with ashes).

6. "Alas ! What a pity, brother ! You are obviously very much exhausted. Your honour alone has carried the palanquin to a great distance for a long time, and these other co-bearers are as good as non-existent. You are neither stout nor possessing a well built body. And you are overcome with old age, oh friend !" Though he was thus severely reproached in an insulting manner, he (Bharata) who had never superimposed the false notion of I-ness and mine-ness on his final body which was created by nescience (*avidyā*) as a combination of gross matter (five elements), attributes (ten sense organs), (effects of past) actions (merits and sins) and the mind—an unreal configuration of aggregates and who was on the verge of merging into Brahman[205], silently carried the palanquin as before.

7. Later on, when the palanquin was borne irregularly again, Rahūgaṇa flared up in rage and said, "Oh! What does

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204. *upāyāḥ sāma dānaṁ ca bhedo daṇḍas tathaiva ca /*
samyak prayuktāḥ siddhyeyur daṇḍas tvagatikā gatiḥ //
Yājñavalkya Smṛti 1.346

Conciliation or negotiation (sāman), bribery (dāna), sowing dissension (*bheda*) and punishment (*daṇḍa*) are the stratagems or expedients to deal with enemies (in the case of Kings).

205. Brahma-bhūta—(1) One whose mind is absorbed in Brahman—VJ.

(ii) One who has realized the identity of his self and Brahman by the cessation of *āvidyā*—GD.

this mean? You are (as good as) dead though alive. Disdaining me (who am your lord), you transgress the command of your lord. Like unto Yama, (the god with a rod) who metes out punishment to people, I shall administer the corrective remedy to you, a negligent fellow, so that you will come to your senses."

8. The venerable Brāhmaṇa who was to be absorbed into the Supreme Spirit (*Brahman*) was the well-wisher of all beings (even those who offended him), the very self of them all. Totally free from pride, he spoke with a slight smile to Raḥūgaṇa who indulged in a good deal of irrelevant bragging. This way Rahūgaṇa who was puffed up with the pride of being the lord of men, who being inebriated with arrogance and infatuation born of *rajas* and *tamas* contemptuously disregarded the whole community of the votaries of the Lord (who are beloved of him) by insulting Bharata, who, though (in conceit wrongly) considered himself to be learned, had little knowledge of the modes of behaviour of masters of yoga.

The Brāhmaṇa said:

9* What you stated (about fatigue, bearing palanquin alone for a long distance, etc. in 6 above) is a fact. There is no sarcasm (therein) Oh warrior![206] If there be anything like a burden, and if it be borne by a body called bearer, and if the body has any relation with me, then the taunt would apply to me. (But that is not the case due to the unreality of the burden and the bearer and their non-relation to me—the self). So also if a station is to be reached by the goer, there

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* (i) What you spoke is true from the popular point of view. But if there be a burden to the bearer, the consequent fatigue is possible; it however is not applicable to me as I am not carrying anything. If there be some station to be reached there would have been distance to be covered but such movement is obviously non-existent in my case. The epithet 'fat' may be applicable to the body which is a conglomeration of *bhūtas* and not to me in the language of those who have realized the Self (*ātman*) —VR.

(ii) VJ. endorses the same interpretation in different words.

206. v.l. *addha*—directly, in the real sense of the term.

would be (the existence of) the way[207]. Only the fools and never the wise, apply the epithet 'stout' to the Soul. For this description is applicable to the (body which is) the conglomeration of *bhūtas* etc. (and not to the Soul).[208]

10. Corpulence and emaciation, (bodily) pains and (mental) worries, hunger and thirst, fear, quarrelsomeness, desire, old age, sleep, attachment, anger, arrogance and griefs—all these apply to one who is born with a body, but not to me (who am the self and not the body).

11. (As for your words, "You are as good as dead though alive", I say that): Simultaneousness of life and death is the law found applicable to everything that is a product (and hence subject to transformation, and not limited to me) for all products have a beginning and an end. (As for your charge of transgressing your orders), Oh praiseworthy king! If the relation as servant and master were real and permanent, then only would the relation between order and its execution be real. (But if you lose your kingdom and I become a king, the whole relation will be reversed).

12* (If you think that I am a servant so long as you are the king) we do not find the slightest ground for the notion of the difference as king and his servant, except conventional verbal usage. Who is then the ruler and what it is to be governed (servant)? However (if you still entertain the notion of being the ruler) please tell what we should do for you.

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207. Just as you concentrate in ruling your kingdom, pay similar attention to what I say—GD.

208. I am by nature the Supreme Soul to which the epithet 'stout' is slanderous,—VG.

* (i) VJ. goes out of his way to prove the superiority of Hari to Rudra while explaining this verse :

Master-servant relation is reversable in the case of men but not so in the case of gods. This unchangeable lordship among gods is conferred on Rudra by Hari—the real Ruler. The ignorant subjects of Sindhu call you a ruler. But this is a conventional verbal usage. You are in no way superior to other *jīvas*. However granting that you are the ruler, please tell us what should be done for you.

(ii) GD. waxes eloquent to establish the Śuddhādvaita thesis : The pure Brahman (unsoiled by Māyā etc.) is the reality and not the master-servant relation." He does not differ in the interpretation.

13* (Bharata presents a dilemma to show that the King's threat of punishment is wide of mark. If I be a *mukta* —beyond bondage of *saṁsāra* what purpose and to what extent, can be served by your treatment (punishment) or lessons to me who am established in the self, though appearing like a lunatic, intoxicated or dull-witted person. (If I be not a *mukta* the proposed punishment or lesson to a person who is obstinate or insane is (as useless as) grinding flour, Oh warrior[209].''

Śrī Śuka said:

14. In this way, Bharata replied (each and every) statement (of the king) after recapitulating them. The great sage was tranquil and self-controlled by nature. Nescience—the cause of false identification of the body with the Soul, had ceased in him. He wanted to exhaust by sufferance (the effect of) the *karma* that was bearing fruition, and (thence) he continued to bear the vehicle of the king.

15. By the force of his genuine right faith, the king of Sindhu-Sauvīra countries became eligible to enquire into the Truth. Having (carefully) listened to the speech of the Brāhmaṇa which was calculated to resolve the knot (of ignorance) at one's heart and which was approved of (and supported by) many treatises on Yoga (self-knowledge), he got down (from the palanquin) in haste, and prostrated himself (before him) with his head at the sage's feet. Beseeching forgiveness (for his rudeness), and completely free from the pride of his royalty, he said:

16. "Who are you of the great Brāhmaṇas who go about in disguise, as you wear the sacred thread? Who are you among the *avadhūtas* (like Dattātreya and others, if you be an *avadhūta*) ? Whose son are you ? What is your native place ? Why have you come here ? If you have come for our spiritual well-being, are you not the sage Kapila ?

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* VJ. : Bharata explains to the king that despite his appearance like a mad person etc., he is totally immersed in Lord Hari; and as such, the punishment proposed is useless; for he has completely detached himself from his corporal body.

209. Your prowess may have been effective elsewhere, but is vain against me.

17. I am not afraid of the thunderbolt of the lord of gods (Indra), of the trident of the three-eyed god (Śiva), or of the rod of Yama (the god of death). I do not fear the missiles of (the fire-god), the Sun-god, the wind-god and the lord of wealth (Kubera). But I am terribly afraid of disrespecting the Brāhmaṇa race.

18. Hence please tell me. You are free from attachment. Though you possess infinite power, you conceal your superior wisdom and prowess, and roam about like a dull-witted person. Oh pious sage, your words are couched in yogic terms (or conveying the advice of great yogis) as such, are not capable of being comprehended by our minds. (Or-Even persons of keen intellect cannot grasp the significance of your speech couched in yogic terms).

19. "What is the true asylum in this Saṁsāra"? To ask this, I am now proceeding to Kapila who is master of yoga, and the supreme preceptor of sages who have realized the true nature of the Self; who is Hari incarnate and has incarnated in this world by his power of supreme knowledge.

20. It may be that perhaps your honour verily be Kapila himself, who is going about incognito, for observing the condition of the people. How can a person attached to house-(holder's worldly) life, with intellect blinded (by infatuation), fathom the ways (of behaviour) of the masters of yoga?

21. (The king raises objections to Bharata's speech given above*).

I have experienced fatigue through activity (e.g. fighting in battle). By inference I presume that your honour must have felt the same when carrying a load while walking. The course of the phenomenal world must be real at the bottom; for, otherwise it is impossible to carry water etc. with a non-existent pitcher.

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* ŚR. expounds the logic in the king's speech by detailing the syllogisms as follows :

He who does work, feels exhausted.

e.g, I feel exhausted in fighting etc.

You have carried the burden of my palanquin. Therefore you must have been exhausted. Hence, your statement that you did not feel fatigue (verse 9) is illogical.

22. The heat of fire applied to the vessel is conducted to the water (in the pot); the heat of the water leads to the softening of the grains of rice from inside. Due to the contact with the body, sense-organs and the life-breath and the mind, the state of *saṁsāra* affects the *jiva*, as the states of environments affect each other.

23. (As to the impermanence of the master-servant relation mentioned by you:)

The king is (for that particular period at least) the (real) controller and protector of the subjects. He who is the servant of Acyuta does not grind the already ground material flour. (His performance of duties is not wasted). For by carrying out his righteous duties he propitiates Lord Acyuta and gets rid of his sins.

24. Oh friend of the distressed, be pleased, therefore, to cast a friendly glance at me who, out of my intoxicating pride of being the ruler of men, have treated with contempt the best of saints,so that I may be able to cross over the sin of showing disrespect to the the righteous people.

25. (The king refers to Bharata's words that he was not insulted etc., and says)

There may not be any change (perturbation of mind) in you who are a well-wisher and friend of the universe and who, out of his sense of equality to all, are completely devoid of attachment (even to your body). But a person like me—even though he be Rudra, the bearer of trident, will certainly perish in near future as a result of his showing disrespect to the exalted."

CHAPTER ELEVEN

(Bharata imparts spiritual knowledge to Rahūgaṇa)

The Brāhmaṇa said:

1. You are (really) ignorant. You (simply) give verbal expression to the arguments (which are apparently similar to those) of the learned. You will not, therefore, be (considered

as) pre-eminent (in any way) among those who are supremely wise; for the sages never speak of mundane relations (e.g. the master-servant relation) along with their investigation into(the nature of) Reality. (You regard master-servant relation as real but the sages do not recognize it as such.

2.* (Similarly the ritualistic way—*Karma-Kāṇḍa*—described in the Vedas is also not true. In the highly glittering flowery descriptions in the Vedic texts pertaining to the detailed study of the minute rituals connected with the householder's life, no light is definitely thrown on the exposition of the truth which is pure (i.e. free from the contamination of injury (*himsā*) etc.) and good (i.e. devoid of passions like love, hate) as a rule (persons who dedicate all their *karmas* to God are eligible for such exposition of truth).

3. Not even the most authoritative Vedic (Upaniṣadic) texts can directly impart the comprehension of the Truth to a person who on the analogy of (the unreal, evanescent and hence worthless pleasures enjoyed in) a dream does not conclude that the (dreamlike) pleasures in the house-holder's life (and those in heaven accruing from sacrifices) are by themselves worth casting off.

4. As long as the mind of a man is under the dominating influence of *sattva*, *rajas* or *tamas*, it goes on producing unchecked merit or sin through his sense-organs of perception and action.

5. The mind (which, as an *upādhi* of *ātman*, is designated as *ātman*) is a store-house of impressions unconsciously left by the good or bad actions in the past life; it is attached to objects of pleasures; it is tossed about by *guṇas*; it is affected by passions; it is the chief among sixteen constituents (elements, sense-organs etc.) of the *Liṅga Śarīra* (the subtle body). It assumes different forms (man, beast etc.) under different names, and extends (i.e. causes) higher or lower form of life in the various kinds of physical bodies.

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* (i) VR. : Persons interested in performance of ritualistic *karmas* cannot be interested in pure knowledge. And in the former (i.e. *karma-kāṇḍa*) portion of the Vedas, no decisive conclusion is reached.

(ii) VC. : Mīmāṁsakas do not regard an objective (*puruṣārtha*) higher than heaven attained by *karmas*. Exposition of truth to such unqualified persons is a waste. For this truth is above the taint of passions and free from injury.

6. The mind, the limiting condition created (and imposed upon the Soul) by *Māyā*, entices it (the *jīva*) in the cycle of saṁsāra.[210] By embracing the Soul associated with it, it subjects the *jīva* to pleasure, pain and other[211] (viz. delusion), inevitable fruits of *karmas* at the proper time (of fruition).

7. So long as the mind exists, this phenomenon of waking and dream states manifests itself within the range of perception of the *kṣetrajña*. It is hence that they (the wise ones) say that the mind is the cause of the lower state viz. *saṁsāra* (the product of *guṇas*) and of the higher state viz. *Mokṣa* (liberation), which is beyond the range of all *guṇas*.

8. If the mind is attached to objects of senses (which are the products of *guṇas*) it leads the creature to misery (viz. *saṁsāra*). If it is free from and unattached to them, it takes the *jīva* to eternal happiness (*in Mokṣa*). Just as a lamp which emanates flames mixed with soot while it consumes its wick soaked in ghee, otherwise (after the consumption of ghee) betakes itself to its original state, the mind, which is attached to objects of senses and (consequent) activities, resorts to various courses and returns to its true original self, when unattached (to them).

9. The courses (of the activities) of the mind are eleven —five in relation to the organs of action, five with reference to the senses of perception and its own sense of I-ness. And they say that conative organs, the subtle elements and the body are (respectively) the eleven grounds (receptacles) for these (courses), Oh Warrior.

10. Smell, form, touch, taste and sound (the five objects of cognitive organs), evacuation (of bowels), copulation, locomotion, verbal expression, and manipulation and the eleventh is the body which is accepted as mine; (And in the case of the ignorant who have completely identified themselves with the body, the I-ness is the twelfth course (of the mind) with the body as its object or bed (In the city viz. body, the *jīva* sleeps i.e. abides with *ahaṁkāra* and is hence called *puruṣa*).

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210. *saṁsṛti-cakra-kūṭaḥ*—The *jīva* stands firm like a mountain-top in the whirlpool or cycle of *saṁsāra*. —VR.

211. v.l. *vyatimiśra*—a mixture of pleasure and pain. —VJ.

11* These eleven modifications (tendencies) of the mind multiply into hundreds, thousands and multi-millions with reference to objects, nature of things (the variety of the causes of the products), the effect of previous experience, unmanifested effect of *karmas* (acts), the agitating factor Time. They owe their existence to the *Kṣetrajña* (the Supreme Soul) and not to each other or to their own Self. (Or: The *Kṣetrajña* or *jīva*, being above changes, these *vṛttis* do not proceed from *jīva*; nor do they spring from their mutual action and reaction nor from themselves. Hence all these are *mithyā*—unreal).

12. The Supreme Soul who is pure and unaffected, stands as a witness to the continuous stream of states of the mind which are sometimes manifest (in the waking and dream states) and sometimes unmanifest (as in deep sleep)—the mind, an *upādhi* of *jīva*, a creation of *Māyā*, and of impure activity.

13. The Supreme Soul is all-pervading, the prime cause of the perfect (in all respects), ever-present, self-luminous (not depending on anything for the proof of its existence), devoid of birth (and death), the Ruler of gods like Brahmā, Nārāyaṇa (the abode of the world of beings), the venerable Lord (of six excellences), Vāsudeva (the receptacle of all beings) and Himself the Inner-dweller and Controller of all *jīvas* by His *Māyā* power.

14. Just as the air, entering in the from of breath controls both the mobile and the immobile beings, so does the Supreme Lord Vāsudeva, the all-pervading Soul, enter this universe (as the Inner Controller).

15. Oh Lord of men! A man continues to wander in the *saṁsāra* so long as he has not shaken off *Māyā*, by the dawn of knowledge, and became free from attachments and conquered

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* (i) VR. emphasizes that *kṣetrajña* here should be interpreted as *jīva*—the individual Soul. He however admits that the interpretation of *kṣetrajña* as Nārāyaṇa is possible.

(ii) VC: Due to infinite variety of objects (e.g. sandal, saffron) and variety of natures liking these, and differences in mind due to wickedness etc., destiny or fate and stages in life (childhood, youth etc.) these states or *vṛttis* of mind are infinite. But they owe this variety to God of infinite powers, and not to themselves individually or mutually.

the six enemies (viz. passions like lust, anger, avarice etc.) and has not realized his true Self.

16. (He continues to wander) so long as he does not understand that the mind, the conditioning environment of the Soul, is the field of the miseries of *saṁsāra* (the cycle of birth and death), and the source of a continuous series of griefs, delusions, diseases, passions, avarice and hatred and the creator of the feeling of mine-ness.

17. Therefore, being very careful and armed with the missile in the form of the feet of Lord Hari, Who is the preceptor, kill this enemy (in the form of the mind) of formidable power who has grown in strength through your negligence and who, though unreal in itself, is capable of deluding you about (the true nature of) your Soul.

CHAPTER TWELVE

(Dialogue between Bharata and Rahūgaṇa)

Rahūgaṇa said[212] :

1.* Salutations to you again and again—you, who are the Prime Cause of the universe (God himself) who has assumed a human form (for the protection of the world), and who, in the light of supremely blissful self-realization, have regarded your body as insignificant. I bow to you. Oh Master

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212. Verses 1-4 are an echo of the query made by Rahūgaṇa to Bharata in the same context in V.P. (*Viṣṇu Purāṇa*) 2.14.2-6.

* VJ. notes that this apparent praise of the Brāhmaṇa is really a eulogy of the *antar-yāmin*. VR. and others generally echo ŚR., but VR.'s alternative explanation is interesting :

"Salutations . . . you who are the Supreme Self incarnate who have assumed human form for the protection of persons like me. In your self-realization, you have banished hatred against persons (like me) who have offended you, and who have concealed your realization of the Eternal, Supreme Soul under the guise of the contemptuous dress of a depraved Brāhmaṇa".

of Yoga, who have concealed your realization of the Eternal (Supreme Soul) in the guise of a depraved Brāhmaṇa.

2. My vision (power of understanding) has been thoroughly poisoned (perverted) by the bite of the serpent in the form of (my) false identification of the self with this worthless body. Your speech acts like a nectarine medicine on me, just as a sweet palatable specific medicine (does) to a patient suffering from high fever or the ice-cold water (or the water of the Gaṅgā (is soothing) to a person scorched by the heat of the summer.

3. I shall, therefore, refer my doubts to your honour later on. My mind is full of curiosity. Now, be pleased to explain to me, in easily intelligible language, your speech which was couched in *Yogic* terms, about the (knowledge of the) Soul.

4. Oh Lord of Yoga ! My mind fails to grasp (in bewilderment, the significance of) your statement that the (actual) act (of carrying a load) and its effect (the resultant fatigue) though visible (directly), are limited to (and not contradicted in) practical life (*vyavahāra*), but they will not easily stand the test of philosophic investigation.

Brāhmaṇa replied[213] :

5. That which has come to be known as 'this person' (the palanquin bearer) is a modification of the earth which moves over the earth due to some (inexplicable) cause, Oh King ! Above the feet of this (modification of the earth called 'this person') are two ankles, two shanks, two knees, two thighs, the waist, the chest, the neck and the two shoulders (one above the other).

6. On the shoulder is the wooden palanquin wherein is seated an (empty) designation called 'the King of Sauvīras'— which is nothing but another modification of the earth. You identify yourself with it (that modification of the earth). Be-

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213. Verses 5 and 6 are echoes of VP. 2.13.66-67.
Bhūmau pāda-yugaṃ tvāste jaṅghe pāda-dvaye sthite /
ūrvor jaṅghā-dvayāvasthau tadādhāraṃ tathodaram//66//
Vakṣasthalaṃ tathā bāhū skandhau codara-saṃsthitau /
skandhāśritoyaṃ śibikā mama bhāro'tra kiṃkṛtaḥ//67//

ing blinded with arrogant pride, you feel that you are the king of the Sindhu country.

7. You are hard-hearted as you caught hold of these pitiable (palanquin-bearers) who are already highly afflicted with hardships and have forced them to labour without remuneration. Still you brag about as being 'the protector of the people'. Shamelessly insolent as you are, you will not look respectable in the assemblies of the wise.

8*. We know that all the mobile and immobile creation is always born out of and re-assimilated into the earth only. The difference in name is due to the difference in its product or functions[214]. Let it be investigated if there be any other real cause or basis deducible from its effect and work (functions).

9. (The substance) that is denoted by the word 'earth' is unreal as (will be) explained thus (hereafter). The earth (in its ultimate analysis) disaggregates itself into atoms. The atoms, the aggregates of which combine to form the particular (element viz. the earth) are hypothetical, postulated by mind (of the theorists) through ignorance. (As a matter of fact, they do not exist. Hence the unreality of the earth).

10. Similarly, know that what is thin or fat, small or big, cause or effect, sentient and non-sentient or that which has a second (i. e. all the duality), is brought about by the *Māyā* (the unborn), under the name of substance (viz five elements), nature (the changeability of the phenomenal world), the inclination (determined by the impressions unconsciously left on the mind by past actions, i. e., *vāsanā*), the time factor (disturbing the equilibrium of *guṇas* leading to creation) and the destiny (*karma*).

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* VC : We know that all things mobile and immobile are created out of the earth and get disintegrated into the earth. All these modifications are not different from the earth. Please tell us if you have any reasoning or logical argument to show if there be any real cause other than mere verbal designations of its effects and functions.

214. cf. *vācārambhaṇam vikāro nāmadheyam mṛttiketyeva satyam*/—Chāndogya Up. 6.1.4.

11*. Knowledge alone is pure (unsoiled by passion or actions), absolutely real, one (without any difference) devoid of any aspect of in-ness or out-ness, perfect and full, direct (self-manifesting), unchangeable, designated by the appellation *Bhagavat* (the venerable possessor of six excellences such as Lordship of the Universe etc.). They (the sages) called it ('knowledge') by the term 'Vāsudeva'.

12. Oh Rahūgaṇa! This knowledge (or Brahman) is not attained through austere penance, or through Vedic sacrifices or through charitable distribution of food or through performance of duties prescribed for a householder (such as honorary social service) or through the study of the Vedas or through propitiation of (the presiding deities of) water, fire and the Sun, except (i. e. it is attainable only) by being sprinkled over with the dust on the feet of the exalted Souls (while rendering service to them).

13. For here (in the congregation of these exalted persons) the discourses on the excellent attributes of the Lord are always held. These prohibit all talks of vulgar worldly topics. By listening daily to these (holy discourses) the pure mind of the seeker of Liberation is concentrated on Lord Vāsudeva.

14. I was formerly a king called Bharata who, freeing himself from the bondage of attachment to all things seen or

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* (i) VR.: The Ātman or the Self is knowledge or consciousness. It is unsoiled by *Karma* (actions) and passions; it is the only highest objective to be attained (by man). It is absolutely one whole with no aspect of in-ness or out-ness. It is all-pervading, real, eternal, self-realizing (or direct) unaffected by the six miseries (such as hunger, thirst, sorrow, delusion, old age and death). It is *Vāsudeva* also called by the appellation *bhagavat*.

(ii) VJ. regards these as the attributes of Hari, the Supreme Self. He derives the term 'Vāsudeva'—*vas*—'to dwell', although he concedes the popular etymology 'the son of Vasudeva'.

GD. explains: 'Knowledge' means 'Brahman'. In the path of *Bhakti*, it is designated as *bhagavat*, the venerable Lord (the possessor of six excellences) and 'Vāsudeva'. It is essentially existent and of the nature of the highest bliss and consciousness or knowledge. Being direct (being Self-hood by nature) one need not go elsewhere to attain it. It is perfectly serene as it is devoid of birth, death or othar troubles. It is 'pure' i.e. absolutely unconnected with any attachment. It is beyond the limitation of space as the states of outness or inness are inapplicable to it.

heard (i. e. objects obtainable here and hereafter) endeavoured the propitiation of the Lord, but was frustrated (in my object of God-realization) through my attachment to a deer and was born as a deer.

15. Due to the efficacy of my devoted worship of Kṛṣṇa that memory (of my previous birth) was not lost even in my form (i. e. birth) of the deer. Oh Warrior ! Hence, being unattached to and afraid of association with the society, I roam about without disclosing my real personality.

16. Therefore a man should, in this very world, completely cut off (the ties of) delusion by the sword of knowledge obtained through the blessed company of the great Souls who are free from attachment. Having revived the memory (consciousness about God) by recounting and hearing (meditating upon) the glories of Hari, one reaches the end of this long road of *Saṁsāra* and attains to the Lord.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

(*The Saṁsāra—a forest*: An allegory)

The Brāhmaṇa said :

1. Like unto a company of merchants intent on acquisition of wealth, this (well-known) multitude of *jīvas* desirous of and solely devoted to the attainment of pleasure[215], was put by the Prakṛti or Māyā, on the path (of Pravṛtti—active worldly life) which is unending and so difficult to traverse. It (the multitude of *jīvas*) sets its eye (attention) on[216] the activities actuated and dominated by (the attributes) *sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. While wandering (in search of pleasure) in the forest of *Saṁsāra* (worldly existence), it does not find any bliss.

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215. BP. *artha* :—*dharma*, *artha* and *kāma*—the three *puruṣārthas* (highest ideals in life).

216. VJ. : It (the multitude of *jīvas*) regards them as its own and identifies them with the Soul.

2.* In that forest these six bandits (viz. sense-organs) perforce rob the caravan captained by an evil-minded leader, Oh king. Just as wolves carry away the sheep, jackals (in the form of relatives), finding entrance into their camp, carry off a careless member (devoid of spiritual outlook).

3. In the forest, impregnable with the dense growth of a mass of creepers, grass, clumps of trees and bushes the caravan was harassed by sharp stinging gnats and mosquitoes (In the householder's life full of passions and actions, a man is harassed by wicked people). At some places they find the city of Gandharvas in the sky (the phenomenon is fictitious; so is one's body), while at other places, they witness fleeting spirits in the form of fire brands.

4. Oh (King Rahūgaṇa !) With their intellect (mind) naturally anxious to find some dwelling-place, water and wealth, the company of merchants ran here and there in the jungle. And at some places, with eyes blinded with dust, it does not distinguish the directions darkened with the dust whipped up by whirl-winds (Here the whirl-wind stands for a woman who raises erotic sentiments which blind man to the existence of the dieties presiding over directions who stand witness to his actions).

5. With their ears acutely pained by the shrill cries of unseen crickets (i.e. back-biting by evil-minded persons) and with their minds agitated by the hooting of the owls (i.e. harsh words, scolding directly addressed by enemies, persons in authority), they resort to unholy trees[217] (i.e. irreligious persons) when tormented with hunger. At some places (when thirsty) they run after the mirage[218] (i.e. fruitless objects of worldly pleasure).

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* ŚR., VR., VC., SD., GD., BP., state that although the allegory is explained in the next chapter, they are briefly explaining it for reader's understanding the text of these verses.

217. This refers to the superstition that the shade of the *vibhītaka* tree (*Terminalia Belerica*) is inauspicious by day and that of Pippala tree by night and that of the wood apple tree, day and night—VD.

218. i.e. are attracted to the centres of the non-believers in Vedas—pākhaṇḍa śramaṇas—VJ.

(ii) beg at the doors of notorious misers—VC.

6. At some place they go towards beds of dry rivers (only to get their limbs bruised by falling, instead of getting water); being short of food they beg it from one another. At some places they approach the forest conflagration only to get scorched; at other places, they find to their despair that they are deprived of their life (-like wealth) by Yakṣas.[219]

7. At some other places, it, being deprived of its possession by the powerful government officials (or village chiefs expert in robbery) becomes mentally despondent. Overcome with grief and bewildered, it faints away. At some places, it enters an imaginary city of Gandharvas (the company of loving near relatives) and feels overjoyed for a while, as it is really happy.

8. At some places, being desirous of scaling a mountain (i.e. attempting a great undertaking) it proceeds with the soles of its feet pierced with thorns and cut with gravel and sits down depressed in spirit. Tormented at every step by the inner (gastric) fire (or hunger), and with the (unbearable) responsibility of maintaining) a large family, it gets angry with its own people.

9. Sometimes being swallowed up by the boa-constrictor (viz. sleep) it lies like a dead body abandoned in a jungle and is not conscious of anything. Sometimes bitten down by fierce venomous snakes, it becomes blind and falling into a well with its mouth hidden with overgrown grass and plants, it lies immersed in darkness (i.e. misery and ignorance).

10. At times (when) it seeks after honey of low quality (i.e. courting another man's wife) it is harassed and humiliated by bees (i.e. is insulted and beaten up by her husbands). If it (caravan members) is successful in that attempt with great difficulty, others rob it perforce, and while it is engaged in fighting with them, others carry off that booty.

11. And sometimes, (at some places), it (the caravan of merchants) sits down incapable of protecting itself against

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219. ŚR. explains : The dry riverbeds are the schools of the non-believers which lead to misery in the other world. The forest-fire is the household where the *jīva* is tormented with miseries. The *Yakṣas* and Rākṣasas are the government servants who squeeze out life-like wealth of men.

(lit warding off) cold, heat, storm and showers of rain; at some other places they sell among themselves whatever they have with them and become enemies of each other by fraudulent money-dealings.

12. Now and then, being destitute of wealth, and devoid of bedding, blanket (to sit on), house and conveyance, they beg it from others. But not getting their desired objects, they cast a coveting glance at another man's property and get insulted.

13. (Though) they develop hostile relations with each other by mutual (fraudulent) monetary transactions, they enter into marital relations with each other. Thus they proceed along their path, famished through suffering great difficulties, financial losses and other calamities (and feelings of hatred).

14. The caravan of merchants proceeds on its journey leaving behind those that are dead, at various places, and taking with them the new born babes. Nobody has as yet returned to its starting place. Nor does anyone (howsoever powerful) betake to yoga which lies at the terminus (of the road), Oh Warrior.

15. All those resolute and highminded warriors who have conquered the great elephants guarding the eight directions and who, claiming the earth as their own, have contracted hostility (with each other), shall lie dead on the battlefield. But they do not attain to the place (the region of Viṣṇu) where the recluse (the Saṁnyāsin) who has been free from enmity, reaches,

16. At some places, it (the caravan) clings to the arms (tender shoots) of creepers (i.e. rests on the tender arms of women); it longs to listen to the indistinct chirping of birds which have resorted to them (i.e. listen to the sweet indistinct warbling of children clinging to their mothers). And it feels strongly attached to them. Occasionally, at other places, it is afraid of a multitude of lions and makes friends with cranes, herons and vultures (Being afraid of death, they enter the fold of vile, cruel heretics).

17. Being deceived by them, it (the company of merchants tries to enter the flock of swans (i.e. knowing the futility of the false faiths, it tries to enter Brāhmanic fold). But

not liking their pious way of life (i.e. not finding the Brāhmanic way of life to their liking), it approaches the monkeys (i.e. takes to the monkey-like behaviour of depraved people). By the (amorous) sports natural to that species, it (the caravan) gets its senses gratified (with sensual pleasures) and forgets the (approaching) end of life, while looking at the faces of each other.

18. Amusing himself in the trees (i.e. worldly objects observed in life), he fondly loves his children and wife. Being powerless in their own bondage, he becomes void of judgment due to the lust for sexual enjoyment. Some times falling into a valley due to inadvertence, he catches hold of a creeper and remains in a hanging position, afraid of elephant (below) (i.e. due to the meritorious acts done in previous life, he continues to live in fear of impending death).

19. If, by a lucky chance, he anyhow overcomes this calamity, he again enters the company of merchants (i.e. takes to the path of *pravṛtti* or active worldly life), Oh vanquisher of enemies. A person who is set on this path (of *Pravṛtti*) by Māyā (the unborn) continues to wander in *saṁsāra*. No such person has as yet perceived the highest *Puruṣārtha* (viz. *Mokṣa* or liberation).

20. Oh Rahūgaṇa ! Even you are also set on this track (by Māyā). You lay down your sceptre (or desist from violence to living beings) and make friends with all beings. With your mind unattached to worldly pleasure and arming yourself with the sword of knowledge sharpened by (dedicated) service to Hari,[220] get to the other end of this road (of *saṁsāra*).

The King said :

21. Oh ! The birth as a man is the most glorious of all births in other species. Of what use are other births even in the heaven, where the association with high-souled people like you whose minds are purified by (singing and listening to) the glories of Lord Hṛṣīkeśa (the Ruler of sense-organs—Viṣṇu), is not available to the full ?

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220. VR. interprets *Sevā* as 'the propitiation of the Lord by observing duties prescribed for one's caste (*varṇa*) and stage of life (*āśrama*) and *jñāna* as constituting the worship of the Lord.

22. It is no wonder (at all) that pure devotion to Lord Hari is generated in the hearts of those whose sins have been destroyed by the dust of your lotus-like feet (when constantly served for a long time). For my thoughtlessness and ignorance, rooted as it was in fallacious reasoning, has been completely removed by association with you for a short time (a *muhūrta*).

23. (As it is not known in what form the knowers of Brahman move about in the world, the King pays his respects to them all). Salutations to Brāhmaṇas (knowers of Brahman), who are advanced in age, to those (who are) infants, to the youthful ones, to all down to young boys ! May (blundering) kings like me receive blessings from Brāhmaṇas who wander over the earth as *avadhūtas* (ascetics who have renounced all worldly attachment), giving no indication of their greatness.

Śrī Śuka said :

24. Oh Parīkṣit (son of Uttarā) ! In this way, verily, (Bharata) the son of a Brāhmaṇa sage, who was endowed with the highest glory, explained, out of very great compassion, the real nature of the Self to (Rahūgaṇa) the King of Sindhu, even though he had insulted him. His feet were respectfully bowed by Rahūgaṇa with great remorse. Bharata, whose mind like that of an overful ocean, was unperturbed by waves in the form of senses, wandered over this earth.

25. Even the king of Sauvīra (Rahūgaṇa) who realized the real nature of the Supreme Self as taught by a saintly person (like Bharata), repudiated the false notion of identifying the Soul with the body—a notion superimposed on the mind by Nescience (*avidyā*), Oh King ! Such is, therefore, the greatness of those who resort to the devotees of the glorious Lord.

The King Parīkṣit said :

26. Oh great devotee of the Lord ! The path in the form of *Saṁsāra* of the individual souls has been described in indirect and allegorical language by you who possess very wide and varied knowledge. It will not be easily comprehensible

to people who are not of trained mind. Hence, the same (allegory) which is difficult to understand, be pointed out (explained) by using the proper explanation.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

(Explanation of the Allegory of Saṁsāra—Forest)

He (Śrī Śuka) said :

1. Characterised and influenced by special attributes like *sattva* and others, auspicious, inauspicious and mixed types of *karmas* (actions) are being committed by *jīvas* (individual Souls) who wrongly identify the body with the Soul. The group of six senses (five cognitive senses and the mind) act as the portals or media of experience of the beginningless *saṁsāra*, consisting of association with and separation from the series of different bodies, created as a result of those karmas.

Just as a caravan of merchants, intent on making money, loses its way to find itself in a wilderness, this company of *jīvas* (individual Souls) has been set on this difficult path (of *saṁsāra*), hard to travel like a mountain pass, by Māyā (the deluding potency of the Lord) which functions under the Supreme Ruler Viṣṇu. It (the multitude of *jīvas*) finds itself in the wilderness of *saṁsāra*, in-auspicious-most like a funeral ground. It(i. e. the *jīvas*), experiences the fruit of their *Karmas* wrought by means of their bodies. Although all their activities are obstructed by numerous difficulties and rendered fruitless, they do not still betake themselves to the path of bees (votaries of the Lord) who resort to the lotus-like feet of Lord Hari in the form of the preceptor—feet which pacify all the afflictions and agonies of *Saṁsāra*. It is in the forest of *Saṁsāra* that what are called the six senses (mind and five senses) act as veritable robbers in practice.

2. For whatever little wealth a person acquires through great hardships, should be utilised for the sake of *Dharma*. The

wise say that this *Dharma*, characterised by the propitiation of the Supreme Person Himself, is conducive to one's beatitude in the other world.

But the wealth of a man of perverted intellect and uncontrolled senses, which should have been used for the sake of this *Dharma* (worship of God), is wasted in house-holder's life on vulgar pleasures of sight, touch, sound, taste and smell (the five objects of sensual pleasures and in low desires and resolutions (mental tendencies), even as a company of merchants with an unworthy leader of uncontrolled mind is robbed of money.

3. And here (in the wilderness of *saṁsāra*) the so-called members of the family such as wife and children, are nothing but wolves and jackals in actions. They carry away the carefully-guarded wealth of the close-fisted householder, despite his watchfulness and unwillingness (to part with his wealth), like a lamb well-protected (in a pen).

4. For just as a field, the seeds (of weeds, grass etc.) in which are not burnt down, again becomes densely over-grown with a thicket of shrubs, grass and creepers at the time of sowing, even though it is (regularly) ploughed annually, in the same way, the householder's life is a field of *karmas* wherein the seeds of *karmas* are never destroyed. This householder's life is certainly a box of desires (in which seeds of *karmas* are never completely annihilated, just as the smell of camphor persists even after the exhaustion of camphor-tablets from the camphor-box).

5. While there, (in the householder's stage of life), his wealth which is the very external life-breath of man, is squeezed (lit. sucked) by vile people comparable to gnats and mosquitoes, and (food-grains) by locusts, birds, thieves, rats and others. At times, wandering on this road (of *saṁsāra*), his mind becomes eclipsed with ignorance (*avidyā*), lust or desires and actions. Hence being possessed of erroneous views, he looks upon the human world which is as unreal as the (optic illusion of) the city of Gandharvas, to be factually real.

6. There (in the *saṁsāra*), with a passionate desire for vicious habits of drinking, eating, sexual intercourse and the like, he sometimes pursues mirage-like (unreal) pleasures.

7. Sometimes, just as a man intensely longs for (the warmth of) fire, runs after the fire-goblin—the will of-the-wisp, he with his mind overpowered with the attribute *rajas* which is of the same colour as that of gold, ardently yearns to acquire gold which is the abode of all evils and is a kind of excreta of fire.

8. And again, with an earnest desire for dwelling-places, water, wealth and other numerous amenities of life and means of livelihood, it (the company of merchants) runs about here and there in the forest of *saṁsāra*.

9. Sometimes (when) placed on her lap, by a bewitching young woman who is like a whirlwind,his mind is instantly enveloped in ignorance, due to the force of *rajas*, and transgresses the boundaries of virtue[221]. With his eyes filled with the dust of lust, his mind is too much charged with passion to cognize (the existence of) the presiding deities of the directions (who watch him).

10. Occasionally, he perceives spontaneously for a moment the unreality of worldly objects. But as he identifies the Soul with his body, he loses his memory) about the nature of the Soul. With his memory (mind) thus led astray, he intensely pursues those very sense-objects which are (illusory) like mirage.

11. Sometimes, its (the company of merchants) ears and heart are intensely troubled by the extremely harsh and fiercely vehement threats administered directly, like hooting of the owls, by king's officers and indirectly (behind one's back) like the shrill cries of crickets, by enemies.

12. When he has exhausted his fund of merit acquired in the previous life, he is (in the process of) dying though nominally alive. He runs after (for help to) those who are as good as dead though living, and whose wealth is not useful to them either in this world (as they do not enjoy themselves with it) or in the next world (as they do not donate it and earn merit), and who are comparable to poisonous trees and creepers like *kāraskara*, *kākatuṇḍa* and to wells full of poisonous water.

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221. like goblins at night according to v.l. accepted by ŚR., VR.

13. Sometimes, with his mind perverted due to association with evil persons, he takes to the path of heretics which leads him to miseries here and hereafter—(an act which is) like falling into the rocky bed of a waterless river.

14. When he cannot get food for himself even by harassing others, he proceeds to devour those possessing even blades of grass belonging to his father or son or to "eat up" his own father or sons.

15. Sometimes, he reaches home which is like a forest-conflagration—a home devoid of enjoyable objects, full of a series of miseries. There, being scorched with the fire of deep anguish, he becomes extremely depressed in spirits.

16. To him, wealth was dearmost—a veritable life itself. Sometimes he is deprived of it by demon-like officers of the king who have turned hostile (to him) through change of time. He falls in a swoon or appears like a dead man devoid of any symptom of life.

17. Sometimes, imagining as real, the unreal appearance of his (deceased) father, grandfather in fulfilment of his desire, he enjoys (a momentary) pleasure as in a dream.

18. Sometimes he desires to ascend (i.e. perform in a thorough manner) the mountain of extensively detailed duties prescribed for the householder's life. But his mind being distracted with worldly miseries, he sinks into despondency and feels afflicted like one entering (and traversing) a tract full of thorns and sharp-edged gravel.

19. Sometimes, his power and energy being sapped by the (gastral) fire (of hunger raging) within his body, he gets angry with the members of his family.

20. Again, being seized (swallowed) by the boa-constrictor in the form of sleep, and sunk in the blinding darkness (of ignorance), he remains asleep, as if in desolate forest, and he is unconscious of anything else like a dead body cast off by the relatives.

21. Sometimes his larger tooth in the form of his egotism is being broken by venomous reptiles, viz. wicked persons. He does not get sleep even for a moment. His consciousness gets dimmer and dimmer as his heart is (deeply) agitated and

disturbed. And like a blind man, he falls in a dark, covered well (of ignorance and misery).

22. Sometimes, (he is) on the look out for small drops of honey in the form of sensual pleasure. While he is in attempting to snatch away another man's wife or property, he is beaten to death by the King or the husband or the master (of the property) and falls into the bottomless unsurmountable hell.

23. Hence, sages say, that *karman* of both forms (whether Vedic or non-Vedic) performed in this (path of *Pravṛtti*) sows the seeds of future series of births (of the doer).

24. If he (the *jīva*) escapes the bondage (or punishment meted out by the King, the woman's husband or the master of the property), one Devadatta wrests the prize away from him and from him (another fellow), one Viṣṇumitra, takes it away and so on endlessly. (None retains permanently the objects of enjoyment.

25. And sometimes being incapable of warding off miserable conditions like biting cold winds and others caused by super-human agencies, or by elements (or created beings) or pertaining to his body, he sinks down despondently in unending anxieties.

26. Sometimes while transacting business among themselves, if he deceitfully takes away a petty amount, say, twenty *cowries* or even less than that, he incurs the enmity of others due to deceitful dealing in money.

27. On this path (of *pravṛtti*), there are these obstacles (viz. financial losses, difficulties etc. enumerated in Ch. 13.13) and also other ones viz. pleasure and pain, lust and hatred, fear and pride, negligence and madness, delusion and greed, envy and jealousy, insult, hunger and thirst, anxieties and diseases, birth, old age, death and others.

28. Sometimes, (when) embraced with the creeper-like (tender) arms of the woman who is the *Māyā* (deluding divine potency of the Lord) incarnate, he loses his power of judgment and wisdom. He becomes anxious at heart to construct a pleasure-house for her. His heart becomes transported by the (sweet) speech, (affectionate) looks and (winsome) behaviour of his wife and sons, daughters who resorted to him for protec-

tion. Thus, being of uncontrolled mind, he sends himself to the abysmal hell of blinding darkness.

29. Sometimes he gets terrified in his heart at (the thought of) the discus (viz. *kāla*—Time, death) of the Supreme Ruler, Lord Viṣṇu—the discus is alternatively designated as Time and consists of divisions beginning from the minutest point to the period covering two *Parārdha* years (the life-span of god Brahmā). With inexorable velocity consisting of ages (childhood, youth, old age), this unwinking (watchful) discus mows down all created beings from god Brahmā down to a clump of grass while they are (helplessly) looking on. But disrespectfully ignoring the Supreme Lord, the presiding Deity of Sacrifice whose weapon is this eternal discus of Time, he on the basis of unauthoritative canon of the heretics, resorts to the deities of the heretics which are no better than kites, vultures, cranes on the banyan trees (in extending protection against death and hence) which are discarded in the religion of Aryas.

30. When he was devastatingly deceived by those heretics who are themselves deluded, he (returns and) stays within the Brāhmanic fold.

He, however, does not like their pious way of life, propitiation of the glorious Lord of Sacrifices with acts prescribed in the *Vedas* and *Smṛtis* after performance of the thread investiture ceremony. As he is impure (and hence ineligible) to perform duties enjoined by the Vedas, he resorts to the Śūdra community which like the species of monkeys, indulges in copulation and maintenance of the family.

31. Even in that community, he behaves as he likes, without any restraint. The low-minded fellow forgets the limit of his (span of) life in vulgar gratification of senses such as looking at the faces of each other (mutually by husband and wife).

32. Sometimes he enjoys himself in the householder's life which, like trees, yields pleasures pertaining to this world only. He is fond of children and wife and like a monkey[222], he delights in sexual enjoyment.

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222. GD. : "Just as a monkey addicted to sexual enjoyment, becomes negligent (about his safety) and is caught by the hunter while it is indulging in that enjoyment on the trees and is unable to get himself released."

33. Enjoying and suffering pleasures and pain on the path (of *pravṛtti*), he falls into the veritable dark vale of ailments and other calamities and stays (there) constantly in the fear of the elephant in the form of death.

34. Sometimes, when incapable of protecting himself against innumerable miseries such as heat and cold—miseries caused by supernatural agencies, the elements or creatures or by his own body or mind—he sinks (lit. sits) despondently worrying over endless sense-objects.

35. Sometimes, entering into business transactions among themselves, he acquires some wealth through fraudulent monetary dealings.

36. Sometimes, when his wealth is spent up he becomes destitute of (normal necessities of life such as) a bed, a seat, food etc. He then makes up his mind to snatch away the objects which he covets but has not succeeded to acquire till then. Hence, in due course, he is subjected to insult etc. by the public.

37. Although their mutual hostility is enhanced by their covetousness for wealth, they enter into matrimonial relations or break them according to their tendency resulting from actions to the previous life.

38. On this road of *Saṁsāra*, if one is afflicted with innumerable sufferings and obstacles and succumbs to calamities or death, he is definitely abandoned then and there. They take with them the new-born children. They sometimes weep, fall in a swoon, are afraid, quarrel, cry and are overjoyed, sing and are bound down. They are avoided by saintly people and are thus denied pious company. In this way, they continue to go ahead. This caravan of men has not yet returned to the starting point of this journey (viz. God) which the sages say, is the terminus of the road (of *Saṁsāra*).

39. For, he who gets knowledge of and takes to the discipline of Yoga, does not definitely return to the universe or *saṁsāra*. It is only the meditative persons who have renounced all forms of violence (to all creatures) and are firmly given to self-control (and consequent serenity), and who have detached their minds (from worldly objects), reach the Supreme (Self).

40. Even the royal sages who have conquered the elephants guarding all directions and perform sacrifices, do not attain it. Asserting their claim on the earth that it is their own and entering into hostilities for it (its possession), they lie dead on the battlefield, leaving their bodies on the earth (claimed by them) and depart. (These also do not reach the other end of *Saṁsāra*).

41. Supporting themselves by catching hold of the creeper of *karma* and getting out, with great difficulty, from the miserable hell, he is again present on the way of *Saṁsāra*, and rejoins the caravan of men. Similar is the case of men who have gone up to the Heaven.

Thus do they sing of Bharata !

42. Just as a fly cannot, even in its imagination soar up along the path of Garuḍa (high up in the sky), no other King in this world can even mentally follow the path of the high-souled royal sage Bharata, the son of Ṛṣabha.

43. Even while he was a youth, he longed to serve the Lord of hallowing renown (or of Supreme glory), and abandoned like excreta, his wife and children, friends and kingdom, so endearing to the heart and (hence) so difficult to renounce.

44. It is quite befitting on the part of the king (Bharata) that he did not long for the (kingdom of the) earth, sons, relatives, wealth and wife—so difficult to renounce. Nor did he wish for Śrī (the Goddess of Fortune), coveted by great gods, even though She waited for having a gracious look from him. For in the view of the great (Souls) whose minds are devotedly attached to the service of Viṣṇu, even the Final Emancipation is of little account.

45. "Salutations to Lord Hari who is himself the personified *Yajña* (sacrifice), the defender of righteousness, punctilious observance of scriptural injunctions, Yoga *incarnate*, the head (the ultimate, chief principle) of the *Sāṁkhyas*, the controller of the *Prakṛti* (the personified Will or Māyā of the Almighty), who is the shelter of all created beings)", so nobly praised he, at the time of casting off his body as a deer.

46. One who faithfully listens to, recites or praises the history of the royal sage Bharata whose spotless virtues and pure actions are appreciated and eulogised by devotees of the

Lord—the history which brings in good fortune, long life, riches, renown and leads to (the attainment of) the Heaven and Final Beatitude secures all blessings, of his own accord and needs nothing from others.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

(*Description of Bharata's Dynasty**)

Śrī Śuka continued :

1. As already narrated (supra 7.3), Bharata had a son called Sumati. He followed the path of Ṛṣabha. In the Kali Age, heretics (non-believers in the Vedas) outside the Aryan fold, will set him up, according to their wicked and perverted intelligence, as a deity n ot described in the Vedic

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* The Bharata Dynasty may be conveniently summarised as follows:

1. Bharata
2. Sumati
3. Devatājit
4. Devadyumna
5. Parameṣṭhī
6. Pratīha Prastotā Udgātā
7. Pratihartā
8. Bhūmā Aja
9. Udgītha
10. Prastāva
11. Vibhu
12. Pṛthuṣeṇa
13. Nakta
14. Gaya
15. Chitraratha Sugati Avarodhana
16. Samrāṭ
17. Marīci
18. Bindumān
19. Madhu
20. Vīravrata
21. Manthu Pramanthu
22. Bhauvana
23. Tvaṣṭā
24. Viraja
25. Śatajit etc. 100 sons

texts. (They will think him to be an incarnation of Lord Buddha).

2. By (queen) Vṛddhasenā, he had a son by name Devajit (conqueror of gods).

3. Then, through Āsurī (Devajit's wife) was born to him a son, Devadyumna; he had by Dhenumatī, a son, called Parameṣṭhī; and then Parameṣṭhī begot on Sauvarcalā a son called Pratīha.

4. Having taught the knowledge of *ātman* (to many), he himself became thoroughly purified, and directly realized the Supreme Soul.

5. From Pratīha, through (his wife, another) Suvarcalā, three sons beginning with Pratihartā were born; all of them were well-versed in the sacrificial lore. Pratihartā begot on (his wife) Stuti, two sons Aja and Bhūman.

6. Bhūman had by Ṛṣikulyā a son called Udgītha. He had (a son named) Prastāva from Devakulyā. Prastāva had a son called Vibhu, through (queen) Niyutsā; Vibhu had Pṛthuṣeṇa from Rati; Pṛthuṣeṇa begot Nakta from Ākūtī. From Nakta and (his wife) Druti was born the eminent royal sage Gaya of noble reputation. Gaya who attained the status of a *Mahāpuruṣa* (an exalted personage) by his possession of characteristics (of greatness) such as self-control, was an *aṁśa* (part or ray) of Lord Viṣṇu himself who, for the protection of the world, assumed a form consisting of pure *Sattva*.

7. He followed his righteous duty as a king by protecting his subjects, supplying them with the means of livelihood, providing them with (amenities of) recreation behaving tenderly with them and by governing them per legal precepts. He dedicated with absolute faith his sacrificial and other pious acts to the glorious great personage viz. the Brahman who is higher than the highest.

By constantly serving the feet of those who have realized Brahman and by cultivating path of devotion to the Lord, his mind and intellect became extremely pure. His mind became completely free from the false identification of the non-Soul (viz. the body and its belongings) with the Soul. Though he realized within him the identification of his Self with Brahman,

he was totally free from pride and as such he protected the earth.

8. Oh descendant of Pāṇḍavas ! Persons well-versed in Purāṇic history sing the following stanzas about him.

9. "What other king, except the one in whom a ray of the Lord has been manifest, can equal Gaya in his achievements ? Who else is there like him, a performer of great sacrifices, so highly respected by all, possessor of extensive scholarship, a defender of religion, one so highly blessed with the Goddess of Fortune, a leader of the assembly of the learned and a devoted servant of the saints.

10. The virtuous daughters of Dakṣa (such as Śraddhā, Maitrī, Dayā) whose blessings always prove true, accompanied the presiding deities of holy rivers (like Gaṅgā) sprinkled him with water (at the time of his coronation) in ecstatic joy. The king, himself was free from desire. But just as the milk begins to flow out of the udders of a cow at the sight of its calf, so at the sight of his excellent virtues, the earth yielded like a cow, milk in the form of the desired objects of his subjects.

11. Though he (Gaya) was above desires, Vedas and the rites prescribed therein blessed him with all enjoyments. (Inimical) kings who were honoured by him with a volley of arrows in the battle, brought him tributes. The Brāhmaṇas who were honoured by him with sumptuous sacrificial fees and donations while performing religious acts, allotted to him one-sixth of their total merit.

12. In his sacrifices, liberal libations of Soma juice were offered. While Indra (the king of gods) became intoxicated (with Soma juice), the glorious Lord who is the Soul of the Sacrifices appeared in person and accepted the fruit of the Sacrifice offered (by the king) in the spirit of unswerving devotion rendered absolutely pure by (unflinching) faith.

13. By pleasing whom (i.e. the Lord) the whole universe from god Brahmā upto gods, men, sub-human beings, creepers and grass, become the Self-same Lord, the very Soul of the universe, who, though ever blissful by nature, became evidently satisfied and delighted at Gaya's performance of sacrifice.

14. Gaya begot on Gayantī three sons, Citraratha, Sugati and Avarodhana. Out of them, Citraratha had by queen Ūrṇā a son called Samrāṭ.

15. From Samrāṭ, thorough Utkalā, was born Marīci. From Marīci and Bindumatī was born Bindumān; he had by Saraghā (a son) named Madhu; Madhu begot Vīravrata on Sumanas; from Vīravrata and queen Bhojā were born Manthu and Pramanthu; of Manthu, through Satyā, sprang Bhauvana; of Bhauvana and Dūṣaṇā was born Tvaṣṭā; from Tvaṣṭā through Virocanā came Viraja; and Viraja had by Viṣūcī a hundred sons, of whom Śatajit was the eldest, and also a daughter.

About Viraja is sung the following stanza :

16. Viraja, the last born son (in the race of Priyavrata) adorned the dynasty of Priyavrata by his glory, even as Viṣṇu embellishes the host of gods.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN*

(*Mythological Geography—The Terrestrial Globe*)

The King said :

1. The whole extent of the globe of the earth on which the Sun shines and where the Moon with the hosts of stars is visible, has been described by you.

2. Within that area, seven seas were formed by the seven (moat-like) ruts, furrowed by the wheels of (king) Priyavrata's

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* This and the following chapters deal with geography. Most of the material is common to other Purāṇas. Purāṇic geography is not all imagination, vide V.S. Agrawala : *M.P.—A Study*, pp. 184-215, D. C. Sircar's SGAMI., pp. 17-118, N. L. De's GDAMI. The concept of the earth with four continents (*catur-dvipā Vasumatī*) and the details of the lands, mountains, rivers etc. tally a great deal with the details in the East, West and South Asia. —The 'Greater India' of to day was regarded not merely an extension of India but a part of one unit separated by seas. (Vide B. Upadhyaya—*Purāṇa-Vimarśa*, pp. 338-341.

chariot. You have verily suggested, venerable Sir, that the divisions of this earth in seven distinct island-continents is due to those (seas). I am now desirous to know all about the dimensions and characteristics of those continents, in detail.

3. For, the mind, when concentrated on the Lord's gross form—the physical universe, a product of three *guṇas*, becomes capable of entering into and fixing on the attributeless, subtle-most, self-refulgent, transcendent *Brahman* known as Lord Vāsudeva. Oh Preceptor, may you be pleased to describe to me the same.

The sage (Śrī Śuka) said :

4. Oh great King ! No human being, even if it be blessed with the longevity of gods, can adequately comprehend even by mind or (can express) by speech, the extent of Lord's great glories (viz. the universe) displayed through the (product of) three *guṇas* of His *Māyā* Potency. We, therefore, shall mainly describe to you the special features of the terrestrial globe, with the names, position, extent and characteristics.

5. As for this (*Jambūdvīpa*) island-continent (in which we live), it forms the central innermost (the seventh) layer of the lotus-like earth. It is one lakh *yojanas*[223] (eight lakh miles) in extent, and is circular in form like the leaf of a lotus.

6. In this *dvīpa*, there are nine continents (*varṣas*) each nine thousand *yojanas* in extent. They are clearly separated from each other, by eight mountain-ranges forming the boundaries of each (of the *dvīpas*).

7. The inner-continent called Ilāvṛta forms the centre of these continents. At the navel (centre) of this (*Ilāvṛta*) continent stands the all-gold mount Meru, the king of all of mountains. It is as high as the extent of his (Jambū) *dvīpa*. It forms the pericarp of the lotus in the form of the earth. It is thirty-two thousand *yojanas* in extent at the top, and sixteen thousand *yojanas* at its foot, and its root lies under the earth's surface to the same extent viz. sixteen thousand *yojanas*. (i.e. it is 84000 *yojanas* in height from the surface of the earth)

8. To the northern side of Ilāvṛta, are three mountain ranges one after the other—viz. Nīla, Śveta and Śṛṅgavān.

223. Yojana—8 miles.

They form the boundaries between the continents called Ramyaka, Hiraṇmaya and Kuru. They stretch in eastern and western directions upto the salt ocean, and are two thousand *yojanas* in breadth. Every outer range (of mountains) is shorter only in length by a little over of one tenth of the next interior range (their height and breadth is the same).

9. In this way, to the south of Ilāvṛta, are the mountain ranges Niṣadha, Hemkūṭa and the Himālayas. They run from the east (to the west) and are ten thousand *yojanas* in height, like Nīla and other mountains (mentioned above). They form the boundaries of Harivarṣa, Kiṁpuruṣa and Bhārata respectively.

10. Similarly, the West and East of Ilāvṛta, upto the mountain Nīla and Niṣadha, run the mountain-ranges called Mālyavat and Gandhamādana, each two thousand *yojanas* in length. These (two mountains) form the boundaries of ketumāla and Bhadrāśva.

11. As side supporters on its four sides to Mount Meru, are the (four) mountain-ranges, Mandāra, Merumandāra, Supārśva and Kumuda—each ten thousand *yojanas* in length and height.

12. There stand respectively on these four mountain-ranges, four great trees, viz. the Mango, the Jambū (rose apple), the Kadamba and the Banyan, like the flags of these mountains. They are more than one thousand *yojanas* in height extending over the same by their branches. The trunk (of each) is one hundred *Yojanas* in circumference.

13. And there are four lakes, of Milk, honey, sugarcane juice and fresh water (one per mountain). The demigods who drink of these acquire natural *yogic* powers, Oh prominent Bharata.

14. There are also four celestial gardens (on them), viz. Nandana, Caitraratha, Vaibhrājaka and Sarvato-bhadra.

15. While listening to their eulogies sung by bands of demigods (like Gandhrva, and Kinnara), prominent gods, heading the bevies of celestial beauties, indulge in sports, in those celestial gardens.

16. From the top of the celestial mango tree eleven hundred *yojanas* in height, fall nectar-like sweet mangoes, as

big as mountain peaks, on the upper side of the Mountain Mandāra.

17. A river, named Aruṇodā(a river of deep red water) is formed. It is so called because it carries as water extremely sweet, fragrant, scented abundant reddish juice of the mangoes (falling from the tree and) bursting open. It falls down from the crest of Mount Mandāra and waters the eastern part of Ilāvṛta.

18. When the damsels of Yakṣa tribe, the female attendants of goddess Pārvatī, enjoy the sweet juice of Aruṇodā, their person becomes so fragrant that the breeze coming in contact with them gets charged with perfume, and it diffuses that perfume over an area of ten *yojanas* (in radius).

19. In this way rose-apples, as big as elephants, and containing very fine seed, fall from a very great height and burst open. The river Jambū formed out of their juice, falls from the peak of Mount Merumandāra, ten thousand *yojanas* in height, down to the ground and irrigates the whole of Ilāvṛta, lying south of the river.

20. The clay on both the banks of that river gets saturated through and through, with that juice (of rose-apples). With the chemical change wrought by the action of the wind and the Sun (on it), it (the clay) is transmuted into gold known as Jāmbunada and it is always used for ornaments by celestial beings.

21. How wonderful ! The gods and other heavenly beings along with their consorts, wear that (variety of) gold in the forms of various ornaments such as crowns and diadems, bangles, girdles and other ornaments.

22. There grows a big Kadamda tree on the Supārśva mountain. From its hollows flow out five currents of honey each five *āyāmas*[224] in dimension. They fall from the tops of Supārśva, they spread joy to the region of Ilāvṛta lying to the west of those currents.

23. The wind (breath) issuing out of the months of those who drink from those currents (of honey), spreads fragrance on an area of one hundred *yojanas* (in radius).

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224. *āyāma*—Vyāma—a measure of length equal to the space between the tips of the fingers of either hands when the arms are extended (*Vyāmo bāhvoḥ sakarayos tatayos tiryagantaram*/—ŚR.)

24. Similary, there stands a banyan tree called *Śata-valśa* on mount Kumuda. From the branches (lit. arms) of that tree flow forth all streams, capable of yielding whatever one desires, such as milk, curds, honey, clarified butter, raw sugar, (delicious) food, garments, beds, seats or chairs, ornaments and others. These streams fall down from the summits of mount Kumuda and flow in the northern part of Ilāvṛta.

25. Subjects (beings) who make use of these river-waters never suffer afflictions from wrinkles, baldness, fatigue, perspiration, bad odours, old age, diseases and death or from cold, heat, paleness and other troubles. They enjoy the highest bliss all through their life.

26. Like filaments on the seed-vessels in a lotus, around the base of Meru, on all sides, there are twenty mountains viz. Kuraṅga, Kurara, Kusumbha, Vaikaṅka, Trikūṭa, Śiś ira, Pataṅga, Rucaka, Niṣadha, Śinī-Vāsa, Kapila, Śaṅkha, Vaidūrya, Jārudhi, Haṁsa, Ṛṣabha, Nāga, Kālañjara, Nārada and others.

27. Mounts Jaṭhara and Devakūta are to the east of Meru. They extend to the north for eighteen thousand *yojanas* in length, and two thousand *yojanas* in breadth, and in height. Similarly to the west (of Meru) stand two mountain-ranges, Pavana and Pāriyātra. To the south are situated Kailāsa and Karavīra which extend to the east. To the north (of Meru) stand Mount Tṛśṛṅga and Makara. Enclosed by these eight mountain-ranges, the mountain of gold (Meru) shines like (sacrificial) fire surrounded by blades of Kuśa grass. (to demarcate its boundaries).

28. Those (who are in know) say that on the summit of Meru, at the very centre, is situated Śāta-Kumbhī, (the city of gold), the capital of god Brahmā. It covers an area of a ten thousand *yojanas*[225] and is square in shape.

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225. *ayuta-yojana-sāhasrīm*: I followed the text as it is. I doubt the interpretation as the area "a thousand times ten-thousand *yojanas*", although some respectable commentators like GD. interpret it this way without suspecting any contradiction between the area of the plateau on Meru and the city built over it, as the area of the plateau on Mount Meru is only 32,000 *yōjanas*, vide Bh. P. Supra verse 7 above, which states *Mūrdhani dvātriṁśat-sahasra-yojana-vitataḥ*. ŚR. is conscious that the dimen-

29. Surrounding that city (capital of god Brahmā), there are eight suburbs (or cities) of the eight guardian deities of the world (such as Indra, Varuṇa etc.),[226] They are after the model of Śāta-Kumbhī, and are built in a style befitting their masters, each city being one fourth in extent of Lord Brahmā's capital.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

(The Descent of the Gaṅgā)

Śrī Śuka said :

1. In the sacrifice performed by Bali, the Lord (Viṣṇu) himself appeared as Trivikrama.[227]

Standing there (on the ground, he wanted to measure three feet of land donated to him by Bali. He covered the whole of the earth by his right foot. He raised the left foot to

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sion given here conflicts with that given in the VP. 2.2.30 which states fourteen thousand *yojanas* as the area covered by Brahmadeva's capital.

catur-daśa sahasrāṇi yojanānāṁ mahāpurī/
Meror upari Maitreya Brahmaṇaḥ prathitā divi//

This is plausible in view of the area of the plateau on the summit of Meru which is 32.000 *yojanas*. ŚR.'s explanation that the dimensions differ with different *Kalpas* is not satisfactory. VR. interprets this as *ayuta-yojana-vistarām* i. e. ten thousand yojanas in area. VJ. regards *Śatakoṭi* as the name of Brahma's capital. GD. does not suspect any contradiction between the area of the plateau on Meru and the city built over it. He explains: *ayutāni yāni y jana-sahasrāṇi/* BP. explains: *ayuta-yojana-sāhasrīm* as *ayuta-sahasra-yojana-vistārām* but hastens to add, *atra bhāgatyāga-lakṣaṇayā yuta-sabda-varti-sahasrārtha-tyāgo bodhyaḥ.*

226. GD. and others enumerate the suburbs of Brahmadeva's capital as follows: To the East, Indra's capital Amarāvatī, to the South-East, Fire-god's headquarters Tejovatī, to the South, Yama's city Saṁyaminī, to the South-West, Kṛṣṇāṅganā of Nirṛtas, to the West, Varuṇa's capita Śraddhāvatī, to the North-West, Vāyu's headquarters Gandhavatī, to the North, Kubera's town Mahodayā, and to the North-East, Lord Śiva's capital Yaśovatī.

227. This refers to Vāmana incarnation of Viṣṇu, vide *infra* 8.18-20 (Skandha VIII. Chs 18-20)

measure the heavenly regions) by his foot-step, the upper crust of the shell of the Cosmic egg got cracked by the nail of the big toe of his left foot. Through that opening, rushed in the stream of waters, covering externally the cosmic egg. While washing the lotus-like feet of the Lord, she (the water of the stream) became reddish by the pollen-like dust (on the Lord's feet). She washed away the dirt, in the form of the sins of the whole of the world, by her touch, and yet, herself remained pure (unpolluted by sins). She was, at first, designated directly as *Bhagavatpadī* (Born from the feet of the Lord) to the exclusion of other epithets e.g. Jāhnavī, Bhāgīrathī which may imply any other less important source). After a long period of time measured in thousands of *yugas*, she descended on the top of the celestial regions which the sages call *Viṣṇu-pada*.

2. There (at the *Viṣṇupada*), verily, Dhruva (the son of Uttānapāda) of steadfast vows, the great votary of Lord Viṣṇu, even now bears (i.e. sprinkles) on his head her waters, with utmost reverence. "This water flows from the lotus feet of our family deity". (With this feeling) every moment his heart gets deeply saturated with ever-increasing devotion. Overcome with ardent longing (for the Lord), he forgets himself. Tears of pure love flow down from his half-closed lotus-bud-like eyes, and his whole person bristles with hair standing on their ends through ecstasy.

3. Thenceforth (in the next stage), the seven sages (inhabiting the constellation called *Ursa Major*) who know the greatness of this stream, regard it as the ultimate achievement of their austere penance, and even today, receive it with great reverence on the matted hair (of their heads), as persons desirous of Liberation (*Mokṣa*) would receive Final Emancipation due to their achievement of unswerving devotion unto the glorious Lord Vāsudeva, the Soul of all beings. They have grown indifferent to other *Puruṣārthas*, and even to Self-realization.

4. Later on, it (the stream) descends by the path of gods (i.e. sky), teeming with multitudes of thousands of crores of celestial cars, to the sphere of the Moon. After flooding

the lunar sphere, the stream (of the *Bhagavatpadī*) flows down to the city of Brahmā (on the summit of Mount Meru).

5. There, on mount Meru, it is divided into four branches under four names :—Sītā, Alakanandā, Cakṣu and Bhadrā,[228] and it (i.e, these branches) flows towards four quarters and enters into the ocean, the Lord of big and small rivers.

6. From the city of god Brahmā, the Sītā[229] flows down from the peaks of mountains like mount Kesara and others and descends on the summit of mount Gandhamādana. Flowing through the continent of Bhadrāśva it falls into the salt ocean on the east.

7. In the same way, Cakṣus (the Oxus or Amu-Daria) comes down from the summit of mount Mālyavān. It rushes with unabated velocity towards Ketumāla,[230] and enters the ocean on the west.

8. And to the north, the Bhadrā descends from the peak of Meru. Passing from the summit of one mountain to that of another, it jumps from the peak of mount Śṛṅgavat. It traverses the Northern Kuru region, and ultimately falls into the ocean on the northern direction.

9. Similarly, the Alakanandā flows down from the south of the city of Brahmā. Passing over from many a mountain peak, one after another, it reaches mount Hemakūṭa. (Thence) it rolls down, with very great velocity, to peaks of the Himālayas. It flows through Bhāratavarṣa on the south and falls into the sea. Men who come for ablutions in this river, easily acquire the merit of performing great sacrifices like the Aśvamedha, Rājasūya and others, at every step.

10. There are hundreds of other big and small rivers flowing through every continent, all daughters of Meru and other mountains.

11. There are types of *Svargas* or celestial places according to their location in the heavens, on the earth and in

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228. The Yarkand river on which the town of Yarkand is situated—N.L. De—GDAMI p. 31.

229. *Sītā*—N.L. De identifies it with the Jaxartes or Sir-Daria (GDAMI, 187). The identification may be correct for the Sītā of the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* (ch. 51). But the Sītā in the Bh. P. flows *to the east, through China (Bhadrāśva)*. Hence it is not the same as *Sir-Daria*.

230. *Ketumāla-varṣa*—Turkestan and the lands watered by the Cakṣu or Oxus—N.L. De—GDAMI. p. 99.

the subterranean regions. The celestial spots on the earth are mentioned here).

The wise say that of all these continents (*varṣas*), Bhārata is the only continent which is a *karma-kṣetra*[231] (i.e. a land where men can make or mar their destiny by their actions or a land of religious acts). The remaining eight continents are called celestial spots on the earth which serve as places of enjoyment for celestial beings who return from the heaven with some balance of merit unexhausted.

12. In these continents, the longevity of the inhabitants is ten thousand human years. They are just like gods. They are endowed with the strength of ten thousand elephants; blessed with adamantine frame of the body and power, eternal youth, abundance of sense pleasures and extra-ordinary capacity for conjugal enjoyment, the couples are extremely happy. Their wives show signs of pregnancy only once in the final year of their life of sexual pleasures. In these continents, the Time has characteristic of the Treta Age.[232]

13. In those continents, verily, the lords of gods who are richly worshipped with sumptuous gifts by the leaders of their respective retinue, enjoy themselves at will, to their heart's content, in valleys of these mountains dividing the continents (*varṣas*)—valleys which are teeming with hermitages and mansions and abound in charming forests beautified with creepers and the supporting trees with branches bent low with

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231. The idea that Bhārata-varṣa is a *karma-bhūmi* or *karma kṣetra* is common to most *purāṇas*. MP. 114.6-7 and MKP. 57.60 explain *karmabhūmi* as a land which contained within it the seeds of all pious actions and their fruits, and people in this land were entitled to go to heaven or *Mokṣa* or the earth. Other *purāṇas* repeat the same belief, e.g.

(i) *Prithivyām Bhāratam varṣam karmabhūmir udāhṛtā* /BRP. 27.2.

(ii) *Bhāratam nāma yad varṣam . . . .*
tat karma-bhūmir nānyatra, samprāptiḥ puṇyapāpayoḥ /MKP. 57.21-22.

(iii) *na tatrāpi Bhāratam varṣam karma-kṣetram uśanti ha* / Devī Bh. P. 8.7.34.

232. According to ŚR. and other commentators, the Tretā Yuga is a period of sensual enjoyment. In the Kṛta Age all are engaged in meditation. In Dvāpara and Kali, people are overwhelmed with miseries.

flowers, bunches of fruit and tender foliage of all seasons. And with their mind and eyes fascinated with the attractive movements, bewitching smiles and sportive glances—all pregnant with love—of the most charming celestial beauties, they (the Lords of gods) amuse themselves at will with acquatic sports and other forms of diversions, in lakes of crystal-clear waters resounding with the warbling and cries of royal swans, waterfowls, ducks (*kāraṇḍavas*), cranes, rudy geese (*cakravākas*) and other birds which are delighted by the fragrant lotuses of various kinds, and (waters) resonant with the humming of different species of black-bees.

14. In all the nine continents, Lord Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Person still maintains his presence in his various manifestations (*vyūha*) with the object of showering his grace on the inhabitants thereof.

15. In the Ilāvṛta continent, Lord Śiva is the only one male; no other male person who knows of the curse of the goddess Pārvatī enters it. I shall narrate to you later on (Infra IX Skandha) why a male person entering it (Ilāvṛta continent) is transformed into a woman.

16. There, Lord Śiva is served in every respect by one hundred million thousands of female attendants headed by goddess Pārvatī. He (Lord Śiva) is engrossed in the meditation upon the conceptualized image of Saṅkarṣaṇa, his own source, and presiding deity over the attribute *tamas*, the fourth manifestation of the glorious Lord Vāsudeva, the Supreme Person of Four forms (viz. Vāsudeva, Pradyumna, Aniruddha and Saṅkarṣaṇa). He sings of the following prayer.

17. "Salutations to the Supreme Person[233], the symbol of *Parabrahman*, the source of the manifestation of all attributes, (though himself) unmanifested and Infinite[234]. Hail[235] to him.

18. Oh adorable Lord! I take resort to your lotus-like feet which afford shelter to all. You are the Supreme abode

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233. *mahā-puruṣāya*—Whose sport is the creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe—VR.

234. *anantāya*—(i) Śiva meditates upon the serpent Śeṣa along with Viṣṇu who is his inner controller—VJ.

(ii) Above the distinction of time, place etc.—GD.

235. The repetition of *Namaḥ* at the beginning and the end of the sentence shows that *namaḥ* or 'salutations' is applicable to all the adjectives included in the sentences— GD.

of all (the six) divine excellences (such as sovereignty over the universe, Omniscience and others). To your devotees you have fully manifested yourself as one who terminates their *saṁsāra* (the chain of births and deaths); but you create (i.e. continue) Saṁsāra (in the case of those who are not devoted to you.

19. What person intent on subduing his senses (and desirous of attaining liberation will not respect you whose vision—unlike that of ours who cannot control the vehemence of anger—is not, even in the slightest degree, affected by the *guṇas* of Māyā (i.e. worldly objects which are the products of the three attributes or *guṇas* of Māyā) and by the activities of the mind and sense, while you supervise them for government and control.

20. To a person of wrong perception,[236] you appear, through your Māyā Potency,[237] intoxicated and terrible with eyes reddened under the influence of spirituous liquors (though as a matter of fact, your form is pure, unalloyed *sattva*, beyond the power of karmas and auspicious). At the touch of your feet, the Nāga damsels get their mind and senses excited and are hence unable to proceed with your worship due to bashfulness (and the feeling that you, the omniscient know their mental agitation).

21. The goddess Lakṣmī and sages or Vedic Mantras declare him (i e. you) to be the prime cause of the creation, preservation and destruction of this (universe) but as you are Infinite, you are above these states. You do not feel even like a mustard seed where the sphere of the earth is lying somewhere on one of your thousand heads.

22. The principle called *Mahat* (Cosmic Intelligence) was his (i.e. your) first body (manifestation) constituted of (three) *guṇas*. It is based on *sattva* (in the form of *citta*—reasoning faculty), and is said to be (the same as) the glorious

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236. *a-sad-dṛśaḥ*—(i) Who is strongly attached to this unreal or worthless body as his own Self (VR., BP.).

(ii) Whose vision is devoid of the knowledge about your form, excellences etc. (SD.)

237. *Māyā-yā*—Due to ignorance (of a person with incorrect view about the Lord—VR.

Brahmā (the deity presiding over it). It is from Brahma that I (Rudra) was born. I create through my power (viz. *Ahaṁkāra*—I-ness) consisting of three (*guṇas*) the deities (presiding over the sense-organs and mind—the *sāttvika* variety of *ahaṁkāra*, the gross elements (the *tāmasic* type) and cognitive and conative sense-organs (the *rājasa* kind of *Ahaṁkāra*).

23. We—these aforesaid *Mahat* (principle of Cosmic Intelligence), *ahaṁkāra* (Ego), *vaikārika*, (the abovementioned deities), the elements (the principles of *ākāśa*, *vāyu* etc.) and the (aforesaid) senses—remain under his control like birds cordoned together with a string and carry on this process of creation through his (your) grace.

24. This person (the *Jīva*) deluded by the world, the product of (three) *guṇas*, may possibly know Māyā, (his i.e. your) creation, which binds (the *jīva*) with *karmas* but it (the *jīva*) will never easily know the means of getting over it. My salutations to him who comprises within him the creation as well as the dissolution of the universe (and which as such are his form).

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

(Description of Various Continents)

Śrī Śuka continued :

1. So also, there live in the continent of Bhadrāśva, a son of Dharma, Bhadraśravas by name, and the foremost members of his retinue (who are the heads of important families and great votaries of the Lord). They establish in their hearts, with supreme concentration of mind, the beloved form of the glorious Lord Vāsudeva himself, called *Hayaśiras* who is righteousness incarnate. (While muttering the *mantra* : *Om namo bhagavate dharmāyā'tma-viśodhanāya namaḥ.* They sing the following prayer :

Bhadraśravas and his people pray :

2. "Salutations to the glorious Dharma, the embodiment of righteousness, represented by the sacred syllable OM, the purifier of the mind (and *jīva*).

3. Oh wonderful ! How mysterious and strange are the ways (acts) of the Lord ! (Thereby) this world perceives Death, the destroyer of all, and yet fails to cognise it (as such) (For) a man contemplates (to commit) a sin for the enjoyment of insignificant, unreal pleasures and wishes (to continue) to live on the wealth of his father and the son (the old and the young), even after cremating him.

4. The learned persons, assert (on the authority of *Śāstras*) that the world is evanescent. The masters of spiritual science who have realized the Self within them, see (actually) that it is so. They, however, are deluded by your Māyā (Potency), Oh birthless Lord ! (One above the cycle of birth and death). Highly miraculous (and inscrutable) is your working (giving up all the labour of Śāstric studies and meditational processes) I (simply) pay my obeisance to you.

5. The Vedas attribute to you the authorship of the creation, preservation and destruction of the universe, even though you are not the doer, nor conditioned in any way (by Māyā). This is quite reasonable. There is nothing wonderful in your case as (through your Māyā) you are everything, and the cause of all effects, though factually you are essentially different from all things.

6. He (i.e. you) assumed the form of Man-horse (*Hayagrīva*), and recovered from the nether-worlds the Vedas which were concealed there by the demon (Madhu), at the end of the Yuga (i.e. the time of the dissolution of the universe) and returned them to the suppliant sage Brahmā. I bow to him (you) whose will is never futile."

7. And in (the continent called) Harivarṣa, the Lord abides in the form of Man-lion (Nṛsiṁha). I shall describe to you the reason of his assumption of that form later (in Skandha VII). That beloved form is propitiated by Prahlāda along with the inhabitants of that continent (Hari-varṣa) —Prahlāda who is the abode of the excellent qualities of exalted Souls, a great devotee of the Lord, whose virtuous charac-

ter and behaviour purify the race of Daityas and Dānavas, and who is unsurpassed in uninterrupted and undivided devotion (unto the Lord). He (along with the men of that Varṣa), recites the following prayer :

8. "Salutations to Lord Narasiṁha who is denoted by the sacred syllable OM. I bow to the Light of all lights. Oh Lord, manifest yourself completely. Oh Lord of adamantine claws and adamantlike fangs, completely burn down our latent deeds and desires. Please swallow up all the darkness (of our ignorance). We offer our worship to you (*Oṁ svāhā*). Please confer on me the state of absolute fearlessness. *Oṁ kṣraum* (a mystical syllable sacred to Lord Narasiṁha).

9. May the universe be blissful and happy! May the wicked give up their wickedness and be pure-minded! May all beings wish well of each other! May our mind resort to (the path of) goodness. May our thoughts as well as that of other beings enter into and concentrate on Lord Viṣṇu, without any ulterior motive.

10. May we be unattached to our home, wives, children, wealth and kinsmen. If there be any attachment (at all in us) may it be to the votaries who love the Lord. He who is satisfied with bare means of subsistence, achieves Liberation at no distant future. Not so does one who likes (the objects of) senses.

11* The holy waters remove the external dirt of the body by constant ablutions. But the birthless glorious Lord who enters into the mind through the ears of those who having got into the company of devotees, frequently listen to the extra-ordinary, hallowing exploits of Lord Viṣṇu, removes the impurities of the mind. Who will not then, wait upon such votaries?

* VR. gives an alternative explanation :

The company of his beloved votaries confers the capacity to meditate over the Lord and his extra-ordinary exploits. Those who properly dwell upon his hallowing fame constantly find that the Lord has occupied their minds through the ears (through constant listening to his exploits) and he purifies the mind of (mental) dirt. What man will abstain from listening to and meditating upon Lord Viṣṇu's exploits?

12. Gods with all their excellences (like knowledge, righteousness) abide in the heart of a person whose devotion unto the Lord is not motivated by any desire. How can a person not devoted to Hari possess the qualities of the great Souls, if he runs after worthless external objects of senses, attracted by desires.

13. For the glorious Lord Hari himself is the beloved Soul of all embodied beings just as water being the mainstay of its life is beloved to the fish. Howsoever a person may be otherwise great, if he forgets Hari and is attached to the householder's life, his greatness is like advancedness in age (and not in excellences) as in the case of married couples.

14. Hence, Oh Asuras, you renounce the householder's life which is the root cause (i.e. original source) of passions, attachment, despondency, wrath, pride, desire, fear, humiliation and anguish and which continues the cycle of births and deaths and take shelter at the feet of Lord Narasiṁha, the abode of fearlessness.

15. Even so in the continent called Ketumāla, the glorious Lord abides in the form of the god of Love, with the desire of pleasing the goddess Lakṣmī (his consort) and the rulers of that continent (*Varṣa*) viz. the sons (presiding deities of the day) and the daughters (female deities presiding over the night) of Prajāpati, *Saṁvatsara* (a year) whose number equals the days and nights comprising the full span of human life (i.e. 100 years × 360 days per year = 36000). The embryos (of these daughters) are discharged still born at the end of every year as the minds of the daughters are agitated and terrified at the dazzling splendour of the mighty missile (Sudarśana) of the Supreme Being (Viṣṇu).

16. He (Kāmadeva) delights his own senses while bringing ecstatic joy to goddess Lakṣmī with the splendour of his lotuslike face which is enchanting on account of his beautiful brows which are slightly raised, and by his playful glances and winsome gentle smiles, the charmingness of which is heightened by his extremely graceful gait.

17. At night, in the company of the presiding deities of night, the daughters of Prajāpati Saṁvatsara and at day time accompanied with their husbands (the male deities pre-

siding over the day), goddess Ramā (Lakṣmī) propitiates the blissful form[238] of the Lord, and recites this (the following *mantra*).

18. "Om ! Hrām, Hrīm, Hrūm[239] Om. Salutations to the glorious Lord Hṛṣīkeśa (the Ruler of Senses) symbolised by the sacred syllable Om. You are distinguished by all of your excellent special attributes. You are the Supreme Master of my conative organs and cognitive senses and of my internal organ (consisting of mind, ego, intelligence and understanding) along with their specialities (objects and functions).. You are the Ruler of sixteen *Kalās* (eleven senses and five objects—this is the 'subtle body'.) You are the Vedas incarnate. You are the food that sustains the body. You are the blissful *summum bonum* itself. You are all-pervading and the source of mental strength, physical potency and power. You are the Beloved Lord, Love personified. I bow to you here and hereafter (with the *bija mantra*: Om ! Hrāṃ, Hrīṁ Hrūṁ !).

19. By observing (various) vows, (unmarried) women propitiate you, the Lord of all senses, and beseech from you another person as a protector (i. e. husband). But they (the earthly 'protectors' or husbands) are really incapable of protecting their beloved child, wealth or life and are hence themselves poor dependents.

20. He is the real husband or protector who himself is above fear from any quarter, and protects, in all respects, other persons stricken with fear. You alone are such a master. You do not regard anything more joyful than the realization of your own self, (otherwise you would not have any independence, if your happiness depended on someone else). There would be fear from each other (if there were more than one independent rulers).

21. A woman who knows that you are such a Lord and loves to offer worship to your lotus-like feet (without entertaining any desire for something in return), secures all her desired objects. But if you are worshipped and sought for a desired

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238. *Māyā-mayaṁ rūpam*—The form which he can assume at will—VJ.

239. Mystical syllables regarded as the seeds of *Mantras*, the utterance of which is supposed to be extremely efficacious. These *bīja-mantras* show the influence of Tāntrism on the Bh.P.

boon, you grant that desired object only. Oh Lord, if, however the sought-for-object (granted by the Lord) is lost or exhausted (in enjoyment), she feels tormented.

22. God Brahmā, Śiva, gods, demons and others whose heart is attached to object of senses, perform austere penance for winning my favour. But no person, except one who is exclusively attached to your feet, attains to me and is favoured by me. For, Oh Invincible one! My heart is set on you (hence, being dependent on you, I glance with favour your devotees only).

23. Oh Acyuta (Lord Viṣṇu)! Your lotus-like hand is lauded as a showerer of desired objects. Be pleased to place that praiseworthy hand of yours on my head—your hand which you have placed, out of grace, on the crown of the head of your devotees. Most excellent Lord ! You bear me as an emblem on your chest (which shows that you do not entertain any disrespect for me). But strangely enough you show mere respect to me but extend your highest grace to your votaries). Who can comprehend the working of your divine Māyā ?"

24. In the Ramyaka continent, its ruler, Vaivasvata Manu, to whom the Lord manifested his beloved Fish incarnation formerly (while he was in the birth of King Satyavrata), even still adores him with intense; constant devotion and praises him as follows:

25. "Salutations to the Divine Lord denoted by (the syllable) Om ! I bow to him who is the life-giving principle; is pure *Sattva* incarnate; and is (the fountain head of) the power of the senses, the power of the mind and the strength of the body ! I pay my obeisance to the Great Fish[240]

26. Though you move about inside (as the vital breath of all beings), and outside (as the atmosphere or wind), making a loud noise (in the form of Vedas), your form is (invisible to and hence) unseen by all the guardian deities of the world. Just as a person controls a wooden doll (by means of strings), you, the Supreme Ruler, have brought this universe under your control, by (the strings in the form of pres-

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240. For the Fish-incarnation of the Lord see *infra* Skandha VIII. 24.

criptions and prohibitions given under) the designation of Brāhmaṇas.

27. (You, being the vital breath, are the real Protector and Controller of the creation). Discarding you (the vital breath of all), the guardian deities of the world, being feverish with jealousy, tried but could not protect both severally and jointly, the bipeds and quadrupeds, reptiles and the immobiles —in fact whatever is seen in the world.

28. Oh birthless Lord ! Piloting this earth, the abode of herbs and creepers, along with me (Manu, then in birth of Satyavrata) you sported enthusiastically and vigorously on the ocean of deluge surging with heavy billows. I bow to you who are the controller of all multitudes of beings in this universe."

29. In Hiraṇmaya continent also, the Lord abides assuming the form of the Tortoise. Aryaman, the ruler of the manes (departed forefathers), along with the inhabitants of this continent (*varṣa*) worships this most beloved form (of the Lord) and continuously repeats the following Mantra:

30. "Salutation to the glorious Lord, the (Divine) Tortoise, designated by the symbol Om. Your form is specially characterised by pure *Sattva*. Your position is beyond perception (due to your submarine activities). Bow to you who are above the limit of Time. Obeisance to you who are Omnipresent and the support of all.

31. This visible objective universe which appears in innumerable forms and which cannot be enumerated due to its being an illusion, is really your own form (inseparable from you and) manifested by your Māyā. I bow to you whose form is thus indescribable.

32. It is you alone that are designated as a mammal, a sweat-born being, an oviparous being, a plant, a mobile or immobile creature, a god, a sage, a departed ancestor (*Pitṛ*) a goblin, the world as perceived by senses, the celestial region, the sky, the earth, a mountain, a river, an ocean, an island-continent, a planet and a star.

33. The number (viz. twentyfour principles) has been presumed by sages (like Kapila) in you, even though you possess innumerable specialities, names, forms or shapes. In

the light of true knowledge, the number (automatically) disappears. I bow to you who are of the nature of real knowledge or the real essence of the Sāṅkhya doctrine."[241]

34. Assuming the form of a boar, the glorious Lord, the presiding deity of Sacrifice, stays in the region called the Northern Kurus. The goddess of the Earth along with the Kurus (the inhabitants of that country) adores him with unswerving devotion. She constantly repeats the following, the most sacred, secret mystical *mantra*:[242]

35. "I pay obeisance to the Supreme Lord symbolised by the sacred syllable Om—the Lord who can be truly comprehended only through the *mantras* (Vedic texts); who is of the form of both types of sacrifices—performed with or without the use of sacrificial posts; every limb of whose person is constituted (of different kinds) of great sacrifices[243] (e.g. *aśvamedha*). Salutations to you, Oh Supreme Person. I bow to him (who as a performer of sacrifices) is of pure actions, and who is called *triyuga* (manifest in three *yugas*, due to the absence of sacrifices in the *Kṛta* Age, or their neglect and discontinuance in the *Kali Age*.

36* Just as learned experts (in sacrificial lore) ignite fire latent in pieces of (Śamī) wood, by means of friction, so do sages, eager to see you (i.e. your real form) lying concealed in actions and their results (due to their attachment), find you out in (the discipline of) body and the senses which are the product of *guṇas*. They discover you with the help of the churning rod in the form of the discriminative faculty of the mind. I bow to you who manifest your real form this way.

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241. VR : Salutation to you who are object of true knowledge which removes the idea of the limited numbers (viz. twentyfour).

242. *Oṁ namo Bhagavate mantra-tattva-liṅgāya Yajña-kratave mahādhvarāvayavāya mahā-puruṣāya namaḥ karma-śuklāya tri-yugāya namaste/*

243. In explanation of the different limbs of this Lord of Sacrifices VR. quotes : *sruktuṇḍa āsīt, sruva īśa nāsāyor iḍodare camasāḥ karṇa-randhre /* Supra Bh.P. 3.13.36.

* Learned persons who know the Reality as propounded in the Vedānta realize, after deep thinking, your real form unmanifest yet the controller of the body and its sense organs, a product of three *guṇas* by means of their mind or reasoning faculty .... I salute to you who are designated differently as Indra etc. when invoked in sacrifices—VJ.

37. You, the Supreme Self, are discerned to be an independent absolute reality, distinct from the products of the Māyā, viz. gross matter (elements), sense-activities, the presiding deities of senses, the body, the controller (Time) and ego, by those whose intellect has been sharpened and discerning through deep contemplation and the practice of the (various) stages of *Yoga* (*Yama, Niyama* etc.).

38. By means of its *guṇas*, Māyā, though inert (*jaḍa*), brings about the creation, preservation and destruction of the universe through his presence, just as a piece of iron moves about (due to the presence of) a load-stone with its face towards it. This is meant only for the *jīvas* (by you) and not desired for himself. I bow to you who stand a mere witness to the *guṇas* and the working of the *Māyā*.

39. You are the primeval Boar, the cause of the universe. Just as an elephant crushes its rival elephant, you killed the demon (Hiraṇyākṣa) in the battle. Placing me on the tip of your tusk, you emerged from the lowest region in the ocean of deluge, playing (all the while) like an elephant. I pay my obeisance to you the Omnipotent Lord."

CHAPTER NINETEEN

(Description of Kimpuruṣa and Bhārata Varṣas)

Śrī Śuka said :

1. In the continent called Kiṁpuruṣa, the greatest votary Hanumān, who feels pleasure and delight in being near the Lord's feet, worships with uninterrupted devotion—along with the Kiṁpuruṣas (the inhabitants of that continent)—the Primeval Being, the glorious Lord Rāma, the beloved of Sītā and the elder brother of Lakṣmaṇa.

2. (There) he listens with rapt attention the most auspicious story of the glorious Lord, his master, melodiously sung of by Ārṣṭinemi and the Gandharvas. And he sings the following to himself :

3. "I bow to the Lord of hallowing reputation who is symbolized by the syllable Om. I salute the Lord who possesses noble qualities, excellent character and conduct. I pay obeisance to him who has perfectly controlled his mind and who is deligent in the service of his subjects. Hail to him who is the touchstone (the utmost limit) of excellent renown. Salutations to the Supreme Person, the king of kings who is a great devotee of Brāhmaṇas.

4. I take shelter with him who is pure consciousness and knowledge incarnate, absolutely one (without a second); who, by his innate divine power, has dispelled (and transcended) all the states (e. g. wakefulness, sleep) caused by the three *guṇas* (of Māyā) and is (hence) perfectly serene; who is (totally) different from the phenomenal world and is above (all) names and forms; who is not touched by egoism, yet is realizable (as Brahman) by wise persons of pure mind.

5. The incarnation of the Almighty Lord, in a mortal body, in this world, is not merely for extirpating the demon race but for teaching (the ideal way of life) to human beings. Otherwise, how could the omnipotent Ruler who abides in his innate blissful self, seem to be distressed for Sītā.

6. Verily, the glorious Lord Vāsudeva (i.e. Rāma) is not at all attached to anything in the three worlds, (for) he is the Soul and the most intimate friend of the wise people (who have subdued their Self). Hence, he cannot suffer from infatuation for a woman (viz. Sītā). Nor would he exile Lakṣmaṇa (for his technical breach of order by allowing sage Durvāsas for Rāma's audience).

7. Neither birth (in a noble family) nor beauty nor eloquence nor (brilliant) intelligence, nor the charming personality pleases (lit. is a cause of satisfaction to) him. For the elder brother of Lakṣmaṇa (Rāma) has formed friendship with us, dwellers in the forest who are bereft of these qualities.

8. Hence, whether a god or a demon or a monkey or a human being—whoever he may be—should take shelter with all his heart, with Rāma who is Lord Hari in the human form, and he remembers all good deeds done to him. And he carried (the people) in the Northern Kosala (with him) to Heaven."

9. In the continent of Bhārata also, the Lord under the name Nara-Nārāyaṇa, remaining in an unmanifested form, continues to perform penance to the end of the *Kalpa*. (It is) for compassionately bestowing his grace on self-controlled persons. His penance is such as enhances righteousness, knowledge, renunciation, mystic powers, sense-control, freedom from I-ness (*ahaṁkāra*) ultimately consummating in self-realization.

10. The revered (sage) Nārada intended to initiate the sage Sāvarṇi (the prospective Manu presiding over the future *Manvantara*) in the *Pañcarātra* doctrine (describing the glories of the Lord) along with Sāṅkhya philosophy and practice (or *karma-yoga*—unattached practice of *karmas*) as expounded by the Lord (himself). He (Nārada) along with the inhabitants of all classes (*varṇas*) and stages of life (*āśrama*) in (this) Bhārata, adores him with the feeling of utmost devotion and sings (mutters) the following (*mantra*) :

11. "I pay respects to the glorious Lord who is symbolised by the sacred syllable OM. (I bow to him) who is perfectly serene by nature and (absolutely) free from *ahaṁkāra* (ego). Salutations to the foremost sage Nara-Nārāyaṇa who is the property of the property-less. I bow again and again to him who is the preceptor of *Parama Haṁsas* (the highest order of recluses) and who is the Master of those (saintly persons) who find delight in the Soul.

12. I bow to him who is (completely) detached and (hence) is not bound by the egotistical feeling of being the creator or even though he is the Master of the creation (etc. of the universe) ; who is distinct (from the body) for though he resides in the body, he is not affected by the bodily conditions, (and needs like hunger, thirst etc.); who is (an impartial) witness whose vision is not biased by the *guṇas* like *Sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*.

13. Oh Lord of Yoga ! This is stated to be the highest proficiency in Yoga by revered god Brahmā (*Hiraṇyagarbha*) that, at the time of death, one should give up one's (Soul's) identification with this evil body and fix his mind in you who are attributeless (or untouched by the *guṇas* of *Māyā*).

14. (It is only) a fool who, being addicted to the pleasures both of this world as well as those in heaven, feels anxiety for his son, wife and wealth (at the time of death). If like (such) a fool, a learned person be afraid of the death of this contemptible body, all his (intensive) studies (in *Śāstra*, of this learned person) is no better than (wasteful and onerous) labour.

15. Therefore, Oh Lord Viṣṇu, confer on us that (*bhakti*) *Yoga*—which is your natural attribute—whereby we can quickly cut asunder (and give up) the feeling of identity and mineness felt for this contemptible physical body due to Your Māyā—i.e. a bond very difficult to sever."

16. Even in this continent of Bhārata, there are many rivers and mountains, namely, Malaya, Maṅgalaprastha, Maināka, Trikūṭa, Ṛṣabha, Kūṭaka, Kollaka, Sahya, Devagiri, Ṛṣyamūka, Śrī-Śaila, Veṅkaṭa, Mahendra, Vāridhāra, Vindhya, Śuktimān, Ṛkṣagiri, Pāriyātra, Droṇa, Citrakūṭa, Govardhana, Raivataka, Kakubha, Nīla, Gokāmukha, Indrakīla, Kāmagiri and other hundreds and thousands of mountains. There rise in these (mountains) innumerable big and small rivers.[244]

17. The peoples of Bhārata-varṣa touch with their body (use for their personal needs) the waters of these rivers, the names of which purify them even by pronouncing (their names).

18. The great rivers (in Bhārata varṣa) are : Candravaśā, Tāmraparṇī, *Avatodā*, Kṛtamālā, Vaihāyasī, Kāverī, Veṇī, Payasvinī, Śarkarāvartā, Tuṅgabhadrā, Kṛṣṇā, Veṇyā, Bhīmarathī, Godāvarī, Nirvindhyā, Payoṣṇī, Tāpī, Revā, Surasā, Narmadā, Carmaṇvatī, Sindhu; two mighty rivers : Andha (Brahmaputra) and Śoṇa—Mahānadī, Vedasmṛti, Ṛṣikulyā, Triśāmā, Kauśikī, Mandākinī, Yamunā, Sarasvatī, Dṛṣadvatī, Gomatī, Sarayū, Rodasvatī, Saptavatī, Suṣomā, Śatadru, Candrabhāgā, Marudvṛdhā, Vitastā, Asiknī, Viśvā and other great rivers.

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244. For the identification of these mountains and rivers etc. mentioned here and in the next two verses, vide D.C. Sircar—SGAMI, pp. 48-74 and N.L. De—GDAMI under relevant heads.

19. It is in this very continent only that men who are born here can, through the white (*sāttvic*), red (*rājasa*), and black (*tāmasa*) acts commenced by them, attain to the numerous celestial, earthly and hellish existences (births) according to the serial order of their *karmas*; for all (everyone) get the proper type of birth according to (the nature of) their *karmas*. And the Liberation is achieved by the (unattached) performance of the duties prescribed for each class of society.

20. Liberation is characterised by Yoga of motiveless devotion solely directed to the glorious Lord Vāsudeva, the Supreme Soul who abides in all beings as their self; is above prejudices and defects (like love, hate), and beyond the range of speech, and not dependent on any other support. It is attainable by intimate association with great personages, viz. devotees of Lord Viṣṇu—association which can be formed when the knot of ignorance which leads to different kinds of births, is cut down completely. For gods sing this very praise of human life as the means of attaining all *puruṣārthas* (highest goals in human life).

21. Oh ! What (wonderful) meritorious deed has been done by these ! Or Lord Hari of his own accord has bestowed his grace on them. In the land of Bharata, these have got birth in the human species which is useful as a means of serving Lord Mukunda. How strongly we yearn for this !

22. Of what use are the performances of sacrifices, austere penances, observances of vows, charitable donations—all so very difficult to perform ? Or of what avail is this worthless attainment of heaven (as a result of merits earned) where the remembrance of the lotus-like feet of Nārāyaṇa is wiped out in the excessive enjoyments of sensual pleasures.

23. It is preferable to attain (birth in) the land of Bhārata with its momentary span of life to achieving those regions where beings are blessed with a life span of a *Kalpa* but whence return to birth (in *saṁsāra* is inevitable . For the wise resolute mortals (in Bhārata-varṣa) dedicate at Hari's feet, their acts in a moment and attain to the region of Hari, free from the fear of *Saṁsāra*.

24. The region, even if it be the residence of god Brahmā, the Supreme Controller of gods, is not worth resort-

ing, if there be no river of nectar in the form of discourses on Lord Viṣṇu, flowing, and if there is no saintly votaries of the Lord entirely depending on it[245], and where sacrifices in the form of the worship of the Lord of sacrifices, accompanied with the celebration of festivals (like music and dancing based on his episodes) are not performed.

25. But those *jīvas*, who, even after getting birth here, in the human race, endowed with the power of knowledge and discrimination, the capability of doing actions to attain it, the plentitude of substances necessary for securing it, do not verily exert to attain to Liberation whence there is no return to the mundane existence, enter again into the bondage (of *saṁsāra*) like forest birds (which after getting freedom from the fowler's net carelessly play on the same tree on which they were formerly caught and thus get into the bondage again).

26. (How blessed are the inhabitants of Bhārata varṣa). When in performing a sacrifice, they (people of Bhārata) set apart for various deities their due share of oblations and with faith offer these oblations to the sacrificial fire in the proper manner, reciting the relevant *mantras* and offering the substances according to prescriptions laid down, he is the One Lord, perfect in all respects and a bestower of blessings but who, invoked under different names gladly accepts them.

27. It is true that when prayed, the Lord confers the desired object to him who implores him for it. But certainly he does not confer on them the real blessing as they are again brought to the position of a supplicant. But to those who adore him without any ulterior motive, he, of his own accord, offers his foliage-like tender feet which cover (satisfy) all their desires.

28. If after exhausting our merits in enjoying celestial life, there be some balance of merit accruing from a duly performed sacrifice, a religious discourse preached or any other pious act done, we pray for a birth in the continent called Ajanābha (Bhārata Varṣa) retaining our remembrance of the

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245. Or Votaries of the Lord who are the sources (i.e. the participants) of the nectarine discourses on Hari.

Lord. For glorious Lord Hari extends his blessings to those who worship him*.

Śrī Śuka said :

29. Oh King ! Some people describe eight minor sub-continents attached to Jambū-dvīpa. They are said to have been created by the sons of Sagara who excavated the earth on all sides in their search for the sacrificial horse.[246]

30. They are as follows: Svarṇa Prastha, Candra-Śukla, Āvartana, Ramaṇaka, Mandāraharinṇa, Pāñcajanya, Siṁhala and Laṅkā.

31. In this way, the divisions of the Jambūdvīpa into continents have been described to you (exactly) as I was taught.

* D.S. Yande's edition of the Bh.P. gives the following eight verses as additional, recorded in some editions. ŚR. has not commented on them. But they are translated here in case their genuineness be proved in some subsequent critical edition of the Bh. P.

1. Hence even gods desire to be born on this earth in the Bhārata Varṣa with a view to accumulating noble, inexhaustible, pure, auspicious merit.

2. They wish : "When shall we be able to be born in the land of Bhārata ? When can we attain to the highest abode of Viṣṇu by (our) great merit ?

3. When can we, by charitable donations, performance of various kinds of sacrifices, and austerities, adore Lord Hari who is reposing in the cosmic ocean, and reach his abode which the wise sages visualize(directly).

4. The noble Soul who, by nature, is inclined to sing in praise of Hari, or is dear to his votaries or who renders service to his great devotees, deserves to be paid respects by us.

5. The great person whose mind is keenly interested in hearing the exposition of the Vedas as well as in listening to the Purāṇas or in the company of the pious persons, deserves our obeisance.

6. After being born in Bhārata, if a person is averse to pious acts, he (is like a person who) discards a pitcher (full) of nectar and desires to have a pot of poison.

7. He who, abandoning the worship of Vāsudeva, indulges in various acts, (is like a person who) neglecting a wish-yielding cow, desires to drink the milk of the *arka* plant."

8. In this way, the denizens of heaven eulogize the land of Bhārata. Those who, attaining birth herein, indulge in sensual pleasures, are really deluded by the Māyā of Lord Hari.

246. Vide infra ix.8. 8-9.

CHAPTER TWENTY

*(Description of the remaining six Dvīpas)**

Śrī Śuka said:

1. Hereafter the division of *Plakṣa* and other *Dvīpas* into *Varṣas* is being detailed, with special reference to their dimensions, distinguishing characteristics and relative position.

2. Just as mount Meru is surrounded by *Jambūdvīpa*, this *Jambūdvīpa* is engirdled by the salt sea of the same dimension as the *dvīpa* itself. Just as a moat is surrounded by an outlying garden, the Salt Sea is enclosed by a *dvīpa* called Plakṣa, which is double in dimension of the Salt Sea. There stands the great Plakṣa (the Indian fig) tree equal to the Jambū (Rose apple) tree (in Jambūdvīpa). It is of gold and it gave its name to the *dvīpa*. At its foot, dwells the god of fire, of seven tongues. Its ruler is Idhmajihva, the son of Priyavrata. He divided his *dvīpa* into seven continents. Having entrusted them to his sons bearing the same name as that of the Seven Varṣas, he became liberated from *saṁsāra* by practising union with the Soul.

3. The continents (Varṣas) are called Śiva, Yavasa, Subhadra, Śānta, Kṣema, Amṛta and Abhaya. It is said that there are seven wellknown mountains and seven famous rivers in each (continent).

4. The seven mountains forming the borders of the Varṣas are Maṇikūṭa, Vajrakūṭa, Indrasena, Jyotiṣmān, Suparṇa, Hiraṇyaṣṭhīva and Meghamāla. The principal rivers are Aruṇā Āṅgirasī, Sāvitrī, Suprabhātā, Ṛtambharā and Satyambharā. The four classes of people (*varṇas*), called Haṁsa, Pataṅga, Urdhvāyana, (and) Satyāṅga use the waters of these rivers and wash away (the effects of) their *rajas* and *tamas*. They live a thousand years; their form is (free from fatigue, sweat etc.) like that of gods, and they beget progeny like them. With the rituals prescribed in the three Vedas, they worship the Ātman, the glorious Lord—Sun, the gate of heaven, who is described in the three Vedas.

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* Some commentators like GD. seem to have followed a text with different order of verses. Here the text adopted by ŚR is accepted.

5*. (They meditate upon him as follows:) "We resort to the Sun-god who is the manifestation of the ancient god Viṣṇu; who is the presiding deity of *Satya* (righteousness to be practised) and *Ṛta* (the divine law), the Vedas, the dispenser of good and evil fruits."

6. In the five continents (*dvīpas*) commencing with Plakṣa, all persons, without any distinction are, from their very birth, blessed with long life, soundness (conative and cognitive) of sense-organs, virility, lustre, physical power, intellectual capacity and bravery.

7. *Plakṣa dvīpa* is encircled by a sea of sugar-cane juice equal in extent to the (*Plakṣa-dvīpa*) itself. So also Śālmalī-dvīpa, double in dimension (of the sea of the sugarcane juice) stands shining with the sea of wine equal to Śālmalī *dvīpa* in width, surrounding it.

8. Here (in Śālmalīdvīpa) stands the Śālmalī (the silk cotten) tree which has the same dimension as that of the Plakṣa tree. The sages proclaimed that on that tree is the nest (abode) of the worshipful Garuḍa, the King of birds who praises the Lord with his wings consisting of the Vedas. And this tree is regarded as the origin of the name of the *dvīpa*.

9. The Lord of the dvīpa, Yajñabāhu, the son of Priyavrata, divided the seven subdivisions (*Varṣas*) of that *dvīpa* among his seven sons who gave their names severally to the (seven) Varṣas, viz. Surocana, Saumanasya, Ramaṇaka, Devavarṣa, Pāribhadra Āpyāyana and Avijñāta.

10. In those *Varṣas* (continents), the continental mountains (forming the boundaries) and the rivers are seven each. (The names of the boundary-mountains are:) Svarasa, Śataśṛṅga, Vāmadeva, Kunda, Mukunda, Puṣpa-varṣa and Sahasra-śruti. And names of the rivers are: Anumati, Sinivālī, Sarasvatī, Kuhū, Rajanī, Nandā and Rākā.

11. Men in this Varṣa are divided in classes designated as Śrutadhara, Vīryadhara, Vasuṇdhara and Īṣandhara; with

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* VR. : *ṛta*—meritorious act. *mṛtyu* and *amṛta*—Bondage and Liberation. *pratna*—the beginningless cause of the universe. This excludes *jīvas* etc. which have a beginning. *Satya*—unchangeable.

Translation : "We take asylum with the unchangeable Sun-god who forms the body of Viṣṇu who is the beginningless cause of the universe and the cause of bondage and liberation and leads *jīvas* to the course of *dharma*."

Vedic hymns they worship the glorious *ātman*, the Moon-god who is Veda incarnate.

12. "May the Moon-god who, dividing (the month into) dark and bright fortnights, by his rays distributes food to the manes, gods (respectively in the dark and bright fortnight) and to all created beings, be our ruler"[247].

13. Likewise beyond the Sea of Wine (Suroda) and double its size, lies Kuśa-dvīpa which, like the previous (Śālmalī) *dvīpa*, is surrounded on the other side by the Ocean of Ghee of dimension equal to it (Kuśadvīpa). In that *dvīpa* stands a dump of Kuśa grass planted therein by the Lord. It has given its name to the *dvīpa*. It (the clump of Kuśa grass) is refulgent like another Fire-god, and it illuminates all directions by the lustre of its tender shoots.

14. The (first) ruler of that *dvīpa* was the son of Priyavrata, Hiraṇyaretas by name. Dividing his *dvīpa* proportionately (in seven parts) he distributed them to his seven sons namely Vasu, Vasudāna, Dṛḍha-ruci, Nābhi-gupta, Stutyavrata, Vivikta and Vāmadeva, and he himself took to austere penance.

15. In those *Varṣas* the boundary mountains and rivers are well-known to be severally seven: Cakra, Catuḥśṛṅga, Kapila, Citrakūṭa, Devānīka, Ūrdhva-roma, Draviṇa mountains, and the Rasakulyā, Madhukulyā, Mitravindā, Śrutavindā, Devagarbhā, Ghṛtacyutā and Mantramālā rivers.

16. With the waters of these rivers, the inhabitants of Kuśadvīpa denoted by (the classes—Varṇas) Kuśala, Kovida,

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247. (i) VR. emphasizes that but for the division into dark and bright fortnights by the Moon-god, there would have been no food-offerings to the manes and gods. May the Moon-god bring happiness (*amṛtam* = *sukham*) to us.

(ii) VJ. : May the inner controller of the Moon-god whose rays are full of nectar, distribute Soma to manes and gods and food to us all in both dark and bright fortnights. May he bring happiness (*somam* = sukham) to us.

(iii) BP. attributes the division into dark and bright fortnights to the Moon-god. By his rays he distributes food to the manes (in the dark fortnight) and to gods (in the bright fortnight). May that Moon-god be our king and bring us happiness.

Abhiyukta, Kulaka (corresponding to our Varṇas like Brāhmaṇa etc.) worship the glorious Lord in the form of Fire by their proficiency in sacrificial rituals (or skilfulness in work).

17*. (They pray):"Oh Fire-god! You are the carrier of oblations directly to the Supreme Brahman (Lord Hari). Worship the Supreme person by sacrifice (sacrificial oblations) offered to gods who are the limbs of the body of the Cosmic Man (just as what is offered to the part of the body e.g. a hand is as good as given to the person himself)."

18. Similarly, beyond the Sea of Ghee (Ghṛtoda), there is the *Krauñca-dvīpa* twice as extensive (as Ghṛtoda) and encircled by the Ocean of Milk (Kṣīroda) equal to it (Kraufica-dvīpa) in dimension, just like Kuśa-dvīpa by the Sea of Ghee (Ghṛtoda). Here the chief mountain is called Kraufica which gives its name to the *dvīpa*.

19. Though the projecting ridges and bowers were devastated by the weapon (javelin) of Kārttikeya, it (Kraufica) became free from fear as it was sprayed over by the surges of the ocean of Milk and was protected on all sides by god Varuṇa.

20. Even in that Dvīpa was its (first) ruler, a son of Priyavrata, Ghṛtapṛṣṭha by name. He divided his (Kraufica) *dvīpa* in seven continents. In those continents bearing the names of his sons, he installed his seven heirs (sons) as the rulers of those Varṣas, and he himself resorted to the lotus-like feet of the glorious Lord Hari (the destroyer of the Bondage of Saṁsāra) who was his *Antarātman* (Inner Controller) and whose glory was supremely auspicious.

21. The sons of Ghṛtapṛṣṭha are : Āma, Madhuruha, Meghapṛṣṭha, Sudhāman, Bhrājiṣṭha, Lohitārṇa and Vanas-

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*Other interpretations are : (i) VR. : "Oh Fire-god ! You form a part of the body of the transcendental Brahman. You are the carrier of sacrificial oblations to gods and thereby to the Inner Controller in the bodies of gods. Convey our sacrificial oblations offered to gods who are but limbs of the body of the Supreme Man, to him who is also the *Antarātman* (Inner Controller)".

(ii) VJ. : "Oh Omniscient (Fire-God) ! You are the carrier of sacrificial oblations to Śrī Nārāyaṇa as well as to gods who are members of his Person. Staying near us, you make us worship Śrī Hari (called Yajña) by the performance of the act called Sacrifice."

pati. The mountains demarcating the *Varṣas* are seven, viz. Śukla, Vardhamāna, Bhojana, Upabarhin, Nanda, Nandana, and Sarvatobhadra. And the rivers are known to be seven only, viz. Abhayā, Amṛtaughā, Āryakā, Tīrthavatī, Vṛttirūpavatī, Pavitravatī and Śuklā.

22. The inhabitants of that Varṣa (classified into Varṇas) called Puruṣa, Ṛṣabha, Draviṇa and Devaka (corresponding to the Varṇas such as Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya) use the sacred, purifying waters of those rivers, and propitiate the Lord in the form of water, by offering water with the hollow of their joined palms filled with water.

23. (They pray the waters thus :) "Oh waters! You are endowed with powers by the Supreme God. Hence, you purify the three worlds, viz. the heaven, the earth and the intervening space. As you are naturally capable of destroying all sins, purify our bodies as we touch you."

24. Similarly beyond the ocean of milk (*Kṣīroda*) and surrounding it lies the Śākadvīpa, thirtytwo lakh *Yojanas* in extent. It is encircled by the sea of liquid curds equal to it in length. Herein stands a tree called Śāka which has given its appellation to the *dvīpa*. And its extremely fragrant smell perfumes the (whole of the) *dvīpa*.

25. Even of that *dvīpa* also, a son of Priyavrata named Medhātithi is the (first) ruler. He also divided it in seven continents (Varṣas) bearing the names of his sons. In them, he installed, as rulers, his sons, viz. Purojava, Manojava, Pavamāna, Dhūmrānīka, Citrarepha, Bahurūpa, Viśvadhara by name. And concentrating his mind on Lord Ananta, he himself entered Penance-forest (for performing austerities).

26. In these continents, the boundary-mountains and (main) rivers are only seven each. The mountains are Īśāna, Uruśṛṅga, Balabhadra, Śatakesara, Sahasrasrota, Devapāla and Mahānasa. The rivers are Anaghā, Āyurdā, Ubhayaspṛṣṭi, Aparājitā, Pañcapadī, Sahasrastuti, Nijadhṛti.

27. The inhabitants of that continent, (classified in Varṇas) called Ṛtavrata, Satyavrata, Dānavrata and Anuvrata who have washed off their *rajas* and *tamas* by Prāṇāyāma (breath-control) propitiate the glorious Lord in the form of Vāyu through perfect concentration of mind.

28. (They pray as follows :) "May the glorious Lord who is the Inner Controller of all beings, and who, entering (the body in the form of the chief vital breath), sustains all the beings by his five functions of inhalation and exhalation, and under whose control the whole of the universe exists, protect us."

29. So also beyond the ocean of (liquid) curds is situated *Puṣkaradvīpa* which is double the extent (of the ocean of curds), and which is encircled by the sea of sweet water equal in dimension to it (*Puṣkara-dvīpa*). Herein grows a gigantic lotus of hundred million petals of burnished gold, shining like the flames of fire. It was intended to be the throne of Lord Brahmā (who has a lotus-flower as his seat).

30. In the middle of the *dvīpa*, stands only one mountain called Mānasottara. It demarcates the boundary between the eastern and western continents (*Varṣas*). It is ten thousand *Yojanas* in its height and length. Here (on this mountain), in the four directions, are built the four capital cities of Indra (and other) guardians of the world. Over it (the *Mānasottara* mount) revolves the (other) wheel, in the form of a year (*Saṁvatsara,*) of the chariot of the Sun-god. It goes round mount Meru within the limit of a day and night of gods (each of which consists of six months of human beings).

31. The ruler of that continent was the Prince of Priyavrata, named Vītihotra. He had two sons Ramaṇaka and Dhātaki by name. He installed them as the rulers and protectors of the Varṣas, and like his elder brothers, he devoted himself solely to the service (worship) of the Lord.

32. The inhabitants of that continent propitiate the Lord in the form of god Brahmā, with (mental) acts leading to the region of Brahmā (the *Sālokya* type of liberation), and recite the following (*Mantra*) :

33* "We pay obeisance to that serene glorious Lord who is (regarded as) the fruit of all righteous actions, and a con-

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*(i) VR. : Salutations to Lord Hiraṇyagarbha! May people differentiated by castes (*varṇas*) and stages in life (*āśramas*) worship with unswerving devotion (*ekāntam = avyabhicāritam*) that which forms the body of the Supreme Brahman, and is known through Vedas, and which is full of activities like the creation of the world etc., as the one reality.

crete means which leads to (the knowledge of) the Brahman; whom all people should adore (with the master-servant relation) ; who is established in the one Supreme Reality (Brahman) and is (hence) one without a second."

The sage (Śuka) continued :

34. Beyond that sea of sweet water and encircling it, is a ring of mountain-range called Lokāloka which divides the *Loka* i.e. the region illuminated by the light of the Sun, and the *Aloka*—the region which gets no light of the Sun.

35. Beyond the ocean of Fresh water, there is a tract of land which is in extent as wide as the distance between the mountains Mānasottara and Meru. Beyond that stretches a land of gold which is (shining) like a sheet of mirror. Nothing that goes or is dropped there ever returns and hence it is avoided by all living beings (as it is reserved for gods).

36. The mountain is called Lokāloka, as this mountain stands between the regions lighted by the Sun (*Loka*), and those not lighted by him (*Aloka*).

37. The mountain-chain has been laid beyond and round all the three worlds, by the Almighty Lord. It is so high and extensive that rays of the innumerable heavenly luminaries from the Sun to the Pole-star illuminate only the three worlds on this side (of the mountain), but cannot penetrate to the other side.

38. This much disposition of the world with reference to its (details of) dimensions, characteristics and relative position has been considered by sages. The whole of the terrestrial globe is calculated as fifty crore Yojanas in extent, out of which the land from Meru to the Lokāloka mountain occupies onefourth (i.e. twelve and half crores of Yojanas).

39. The Lords of elephants viz. Ṛṣabha, Puṣkaracūḍa, Vāmana and Aparājita have been posted in four cardinal points over (and beyond) that (Lokāloka mountain), by the

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(ii) VJ. : Oh Lord ! Your form, possessing all auspicious characteristics, is realized by the performance of sacrifices. People adore your being manifested in the form of Brahmā, as distinct from the rest of the world, and absolutely one without a second.

(iii) VC. : *ekānta* : One whose absolute devotion is in the Lord.

Self-born god (Brahmā), the preceptor (or the eldermost one) of the whole of the world. They are the cause of (i.e. have the responsibility of) maintaining the stability and balance of all the worlds.

40. For infusing and increasing the various powers of the elephants and the guardian deities (like Indra) who are (the manifestations of) his own part, and for the welfare of all the worlds around, the glorious Lord, the supremely Exalted Person, the Lord of all great Powers, the Inner Controller (of all), abides on all sides on the great mountain (Lokāloka.) He manifests his form of pure (unalloyed with *rajas* and *tamas*) *sattva* distinguished by (his excellences like) Supreme righteousness, knowledge, renunciation, sovereignty and the great eight-fold mystic powers. With his powerful arms adorned with his superb weapons, he stays surrounded by his prominent attendants like Viśvaksena and others.

41. It seems that the Lord has assumed the above-described form to the end of this Kalpa, for the protection and maintenance of the careers of the different worlds evolved by his *Yoga-māyā* (mystical creative potency).

42. By the extent of the area falling with (i.e. on this side of) the Lokāloka mountain, the extent of Aloka (regions not receiving solar light) which is beyond the Lokāloka mountain, is explained. The sages say that the extremely holy region lying beyond Aloka can be travelled only by masters of Yoga (as was done by Kṛṣṇa to bring back the dead son of a Brāhmaṇa—vide infra Bh. P. X).

43. The Sun is located in the middle position of the great Egg of the universe which is at the centre of the space between the earth and the vault of the sky. The distance between the Sun and the circumference of the universe is twentyfive crore of Yojanas.

44. As the Sun was in this inanimate egg of the universe, he got the epithet *Mārtaṇḍa*. He is also called *Hiraṇya-garbha* as he was born of the golden Egg (of the universe).

45. It is by the Sun really, that the cardinal points, the sky, the celestial region, the earth, regions of pleasure (*bhuvar-loka* and *svar-loka*) and Liberation, the infernal regions and the

nether worlds (e.g. Atala, Vitala etc.) and all others, are divided.

46. The Sun god is the Soul, and the deity presiding over the eyesight of gods, sub-human beings, men, reptiles and plants as well as of all species of living beings.

CHAPTER TWENTYONE

(*The Stellar Region*) *

Śrī Śuka said :

1. To this extent (viz. 50 crore *Yojanas* diameter and 25 crore *Yojanas* height) has, the disposition of the terrestrial sphere, been described, with reference to its dimensions and characteristics.

2. Experts in this (science) describe the dimensions (etc.) of the heavenly sphere with reference to this (extent etc. of the sphere of the earth, as being symmetrical in dimensions) just as the size etc. of one of the two halves of beans is known from that of the other half. Between the two (the heavenly sphere and the globe of the earth) is the *Antarikṣa* (Intermediate region) which is joined by the two (by the earth from below and the heaven from above).

3. Situated in the centre (of the sky), the glorious Lord of luminaries gives warmth to the three worlds with its heat,

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* This chapter deals with the old astronomical ideas current at the final redaction of this Purāṇa. It is a popular statement of a scientific subject. We find similar topics discussed in *Devī-bhāgavata* VIII 5-20, *Matsya P.* 124-128, VP. II. 8-12 and the astrological aspect in *Garuḍa* P. 59-64, *Agni P.* 121 etc. The statements given in these Purāṇas are to be taken broadly, as modern astronomical exactness should not be expected in such works. Thus the increase and decrease in the duration of days and nights and the rate of this variation as given in verse 4 here is roughly correct, though actually it is not so uniform mathematically. Other statements are to be taken in a broad sense. The commentators profusely quote from Purāṇas, Tantras on old astronomy which cannot be summarised here. —

and illumines them with its lustre. It proceeds by slow, rapid and regular movements known by the (technical) terms *Uttarāyaṇa* (the period of the Summer Solstice, when the Sun appears moving to the North of equator), *Dakṣiṇāyana* (the period of the winter Solstice, when the Sun moves to the south of equator) and *Vaiṣuvata* (period of Vernal or Autumnal equinoxes), and also in higher, lower and middle positions, according to seasons.

4. When the Sun traverses the signs of *Meṣa* (Aries) and *Tulā* (Libra), the days and nights are of equal duration. When it traverses the five zodiacal signs from *Vṛṣabha* (Taurus) to *Kanyā* (Virgo), the days go on lengthening and the duration of the night goes on decreasing one *ghaṭikā* (24 minutes) per month.

5. When it traverses the five signs from *Vṛścika* (Scorpio) to *Mīna* (Pisces), days and nights are in the reverse order (and days go on decreasing and nights increasing).

6. Days go on increasing in duration, till the *Dakṣiṇāyana* begins, while nights do the same, till the commencement of *Uttarāyaṇa*.

7. The learned say that a distance of nine crores and fiftyone lakh *Yojanas* is thus traversed by the Sun in its revolution round the Mānasottara mountain. (They say that) on that mountain, to the east of Meru, is situated the capital city of Indra (presiding deity of the eastern direction), called Devadhānī; to the South (of Meru) is the capital of Yama (the presiding deity of the Southern direction) by name Saṁyamanī; to the West, the city of Varuṇa (the god presiding over the Western quarter), called Nimlocanī; and to the North is the capital of Soma (presiding deity of the northern direction), named Vibhāvarī. When the Sun passes through these cities, there is Sunrise, Midday, Sun-set and Midnight on the four sides of Meru (respectively). These serve as the special time of activity and cessation of activities for living beings.

8. To the dwellers on Mount Meru, it is always the Mid-day. And though the Sun (with its face towards the stellar sphere, actually moves to the eastern direction) with Mount Meru on its left side, it appears (to move to the West and) to keep the Meru on its right (because the wind called

Pravaha which always blows with the Meru on its right, forces the stellar spheres including the Sun which goes from east to west to move in the opposite direction[248].

9. It is said that just on the diametrically opposite side of that point where the Sun rises (or appears in view), it sets (goes out of view). If at any point, it troubles people with heat and makes them perspire, exactly on the opposite side of the point, it makes them sleep (as it is midnight). Those who see it shining (brightly in their place), do not see it when it is at the (diametrically) oppoiste point.

10. When it starts from the capital of Indra, it traverses in fifteen *ghaṭikās* (six hours) the distance of two crores and a quarter, twelve lakhs and a half and twentyfive thousand (i. e. 23775000) *Yojanas*, and arri es at the city of Yama.

11. In this way, it roceeds to the city of Varuṇa, to that of the Moon-god and gain to the capital of Indra (all the cities are equidistant). So also, in the stellar region, all planets such as the Moon and others, rise as well as set together along with the stars.

12. In this way, the chariot of the Sun which is the Vedatriad incarnate, covers in a *muhūrta* (48 minutes) a distance of thirtyfour lakh and eight hundred *Yojanas* and travels through the four capital cities (in the abovementioned serial order).

13. It is traditionally said that the chariot has one wheel in the form of a year with twelve spokes (i. e. twelve months), six tyres (viz. six seasons) and three navels (three parts of four months each). Its axle-tree is fixed (at one end) to the top of Mount Meru and the other end is placed on the Mānasottara mountain. Fixed to it, the wheel of the Sun's chariot rotates like the wheel of an oil mill over the Mount Mānasottara.

14. Into that axle, there is another axle-tree measuring onefourth of the first. It is like the axle of an oilpress with its upper end joined to the Polestar.

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248. *Nakṣatrābhimukhatayā svagatyā Merum vāmataḥ kurvannapi, pradakṣiṇāvartapravahākhya-vāyu-bhrāmyamāṇa-jyotiścakra-vaśāt pratyaham dakṣiṇataḥ karoti* —ŚR

15. The seat of the chariot is thirty-six lakh Yojanas in extent. The yoke of the Sun's chariot is of the same extent. Yoked to it by Aruṇa, are seven horses bearing the names of (Vedic) metres (viz. Gāyatrī, Bṛhatī, Uṣṇik, Jagatī, Triṣṭubh Anuṣṭubh and Paṅkti). And they carry the god Āditya (the Sun).

16. They say that, entrusted with the duties of a charioteer, sits Aruṇa in front of the Sun-god, but with his face turned towards the west (i.e. to the Sun-god to show respect).

17. Appointed to sing the Vedic hymns, the sages called Vālakhilyas, sixty thousand in number and of the size of the fourth part of a thumb,—who are placed in front of the Sun—sing the praise of the Sun-god.

18. And other sages, Gandharvas (celestial musicians), *Apsarasas* (Divine damsels), Nāgas (serpents), Yakṣas (demi-gods), Yātudhānas (demons) and gods—fourteen in all if taken one by one, and seven if taken in pairs—have different and varied names. And they, two at a time, serve the Lord, the Self in the form of the Sun, bearing different names; they perform their several duties and serve the Ātman in the form of the glorious Sun, every month. (For details vide infra 12.11, 33-34).

19. The circumference of the terrestrial sphere is nine crores and fifty lakh *yojanas*. Out of this, he crosses the distance of two thousand and two *yojanas* in a moment.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

(Description of the Moon and other Planets)

The King (Parikṣit) enquired :

1. Your revered Self has described that while the glorious Solar deity, facing the stellar sphere moves forward (through the signs of the zodiac) with Meru and Pole Star to the left but appears to traverse keeping Meru and the Pole-Star on its

right side (vide supra 21.8). How are we to reconcile (and understand) that statement ?

He (Śhrī Śuka) said :

2. When a potter's wheel is rotating, the movement of ants and other (insects etc.) which dwell on it is quite different (and independent from that of the wheel even though they are carried along with it), for they are found in the different parts of the wheel (even while it is in motion). Similarly, (although) the wheel of Time consisting of constellation of stars, signs of zodiac as a whole, revolves with great velocity, keeping Mount Meru and the Pole-Star to the right, the Sun and other planets depending on it (i. e. the Time-Wheel), their course of movement is also different (from that of the Time-Wheel with which they move); for they are observed in conjuction with different constellations of stars and signs of zodiac (at different times).

3. He (the Sun) is the very same glorious Lord Nārāyaṇa, the First Person (the Prime cause of the universe). He is enquired into by learned sages with the help of the Vedas. For the well-being of the people and for the purification (and timely performance) of ritualistic acts, he divided his body which is an embodiment of three Vedas, into twelve parts. He creates the respective characteristics (such as heat, cold) in the six seasons like the spring etc., for enjoying fruits of Karmas.

4. In this world, people who follow the path of duties prescribed for different classes of society (*Varṇa*) and stages in life (*āśrama*), in the three Vedas, devoutly worship him through different rituals, high or low, as laid down in the Vedas, and through the practice of Yogic meditation with faith, attain the eternal bliss.

5. Now, this Soul of the worlds[249] (or living beings), viz. the Sun moves along the Wheel of Time in the middle of the sky, midway between the earth and the heaven and enjoys twelve months known by the signs of the zodiac as (twelve) divisions of the year. The learned teach that a month consists of two fortnights (one bright and the other dark), or a day and night (of the Pitṛs) or a period required (by the Sun) for traversing two constellations and a quarter in the space

249. Cf. *Sūrya ātmā jagatas tasthuṣaśca*/RV. 1.115.1

It is (further) instructed that the season (*ṛtu*) is that period (division) of the year in which the Sun traverses one sixth part (of his orbit).

6. And the period which he (the Sun) takes to traverse one half of his path through the sky is called an *Ayana*.

7. The learned have laid it down that the period in which the Sun, with his slow, rapid and moderate motions, completes his circuit in the orbit (through the whole extent of the sky) along with heavenly and earthly spheres, is called *Saṁvatsara*, *Pari-vatsara*, *Iḍāvatsara*, *Anuvatsara* and *Vatsara*. (*Vide Supra* 3.11.14).

8. Similarly the Moon is observed to be a hundred thousand *Yojanas* above the rays (orb) of the Sun. As it is faster in velocity (than the Sun), it goes ahead (of the Sun). It covers in two fortnights the circuit made by the Sun in one (complete) year; in two days and a quarter of that distance which the Sun traverses in a month; and in one day the distance the Sun requires a fortnight to cover.

9. It is by the waxing of its digits in the case of gods and in the waning of its rays in the case of manes that the Moon makes the day and night of gods and manes, by means of its first (bright) and the second (dark) fortnights.[250] The Moon (as the king of plant-life and as such a food-giver) is the very life (-breath) of all species of living beings and (hence is called) the life. He is in conjunction with each of the constellation of stars for thirty *Muhūrtas* (24 hours).

10. And this glorious person comprising of sixteen digits (in his fullness) viz. the Moon, is the presiding deity over

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250. The construction of the SK. text is significant. It wants to emphasize the Śruti text :

Tasmād apūryamāṇāḥ pakṣe yajante /

which enjoins worship etc. of gods in the bright fortnight and the injunction *apara-pakṣe pitṛṇām* about the suitability of the dark-fortnight for the worship etc. of the manes. GD. points out the contradiction of the statement 'bright and dark fortnights make the day and the night of gods' in the above verse with that of *supra* 3.11.12. which states 'the *ayanas* are called the day and night of the Svarga'. He reconciles by explaining that the bright fortnight is called the day of gods for it is regarded as suitable for the worship etc. of gods and the dark fortnight as the night of gods due to its unsuitability for worship and other functions pertaining to gods.

the mind, the ruler (and giver) of food and an embodiment of nectar. The sages describe him as one with all, as he is, by nature, the nourisher of the life of all gods, manes, men, goblins, beasts, birds, reptiles, plants and creepers.

11. The Almighty god has placed twentyeight constellations inclusive of Abhijit[251], three lakh *Yojanas* above thc Moon. They are fixed by him on the Time-Wheel. Hence they revolve with Meru on their right side.

12. Above these (constellations) at a height of two lakh *Yojanas*, is observed Venus. It revolves with rapid, slow and even velocity like the Sun, and is found either ahead of or at the rear of or along with the Sun. As it (overcrosses the constellation in the serial order and thus) marches rapidly, it generally brings showers of rain and is always favourable to the world. And (in combination with some other constellations) it is observed to counteract the unfavourable influence of planets (like the Mars obstructing rainfall.

13. The Mercury (Budha) becomes described (in its variations of motions etc.) by the description of the Venus. Budha or the Mercury, the son of Soma (the Moon) is observed to be two lakhs of *Yojanas* above the Venus. It generally sheds beneficent influence. When it surpasses the Sun (and becomes independent), it indicates dangers like stormy winds, cloudy weather, drought and other calamities.

14. Two Lakh *Yojanas* higher up (than the Mercury) (i.e. eleven lakh *Yojanas* higher than the earth) is the Mars traversing each sign of the zodiac in three fortnights, it completes its revolution through the twelve signs, unless it takes retrograde course. It is an inauspicious planet in general portending evil.

15. At a height of two lakh *Yojanas* above the Mars is the glorious Bṛhaspati (Jupiter). Unless it takes to retrograde course, it moves through each sign of the zodiac in one year. It is generally favourable to Brāhmaṇas.

16. The Śanaiścara (the slow-mover i.e. the Saturn)

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251. ŚR. notes that this constellation is supposed to be on the conjunction of the Uttarāṣāḍhā and Śravaṇa constellations. It is supposed to be an independent constellation due to its astrological implications. In his support, he quotes a Śruti passage : *Abhijin nāma nakṣatram upariṣṭād Aṣāḍhānām adhastāc-Śroṇāyāḥ /*

is observed to be two lakh Yojanas above Bṛhaspati (Jupiter). Lingering for thirty months in one house of the zodiac, it takes as many (thirty) years to complete its revolution through all the signs of the zodiac. It generally portends evil and anxiety to all.

17. At a height of eleven lakh *Yojanas* from the Saturn are seen the (seven) sages (the *Ursa Major*). Always contemplating (and wishing) the good of the world, they go round the most exalted region of Viṣṇu, keeping it to their right.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

(*Description of Viṣṇu-pada*—the position of Dhruva *and Śiśumāra Cakra*)

Śrī Śuka said :

1. Now at a height of thirteen lakh *Yojanas* above the *Ursa Major*, lies what they call the highest abode of Viṣṇu. Here dwells the Supreme Votary of the Lord Dhruva, the son of Uttānapāda. The stars presided over by Agni, Indra, Kaśyapa Prajāpati and Dharma respectfully go round him keeping him on their right,—all moving simultaneously (as stars). He is still the support of those whose span of life is upto the end of a *Kalpa* (till the time of deluge).

2. He (Dhruva) alone shines perpetually as he is decreed by God to support like a post all the hosts of luminaries, planets, constellations of stars, etc. which are set in motion by the ever vigilant almighty Time of incomprehensible velocity.

3. Just as oxen, employed in treading ears of corn, are tied to the post in the middle of the threshing ground, with strings short, long and medium in length, walk round in their respective spheres in three circles (at a distance of short, long

and midway between the two according to the length of the string with which they are fastened), similarly posts of celestial bodies, planets etc., fastened to the Wheel of Time in the inner circle or in the outer circle, and impelled by the Wind (called *Pravaha* in supra 21.8), and with Dhruva (the Polar Star) as their support (central pivot), go on revolving to the end of the *Kalpa*, in three courses (marked by the periods of *Uttarāyaṇa* or northerly course, *Vaiṣuvata* i.e. along with the equator and *Dakṣiṇāyana* or Southward course). Just as clouds and birds like hawks with the support of air and piloted by their past actions move about (afloat) in the sky, similarly, the host of these heavenly luminaries which are *jivas* which are favoured with those shining bodies by the union of matter and spirit and whose velocities (and directions of motions) are controlled by their past actions, do not fall to the ground.

4. Some persons describe this system of heavenly luminaries as being supported by the mystical Yogic powers of Lord Vāsudeva who has assumed the form of a Gangetic porpoise.

5. The Pole-star is located at the end of the tail of this porpoise that lies coiled with its head downward. (Just below it) on the tail are located the four stars called Prajāpati (the sage Kaśyapa) Agni (the Fire-god), Indra (the King of gods) and Dharma (the presiding deity of righteousness). At the root of the tail, are fixed the star, Dhātā and Vidhātā, and the Seven Sages (the *Ursa Major*) on the hip; on the right side of its body which coils from left to right are located the fourteen constellations of Stars (from *Abhijit* to *Punarvasu* which mark the northern course (*Uttarāyaṇa*) and the fourteen constellations marking the Southern Course (*Dakṣiṇāyana*)—viz. from the *Puṣya* to *Uttarāṣāḍhā*—are located on its left side. This is just like the porpoise whose coiled body has equal number of members on its either side. (He mentions further details of the positions of the constellations:). On its back is the Ajavīthī (the group of constellations called Mūla, Pūrvāṣāḍhā and Uttarāṣāḍhā) and the heavenly Ganges (the Milky Way) is at its belly.

6. (The constellations) *Punarvasu* and *Puṣya* are located on its right and left loins; *Ārdrā* and *Āśleṣā* on its right and left

hind-legs; *Abhijit* and *Uttarāṣāḍhā* on its right and left nostrils; *Śravaṇa* and *Pūrvōṣāḍhā* at its right and left eye respectively while *Dhaniṣṭhā* and *Mūla* are at its right and left ears. (The group of) eight constellations beginning from *Maghā*, which mark the Southern Course (*Dakṣiṇāyana*) are located on the ribs of its left side while the eight constellations from *Mṛgaśīrṣa* (the Orion) and others marking the northern course (*Uttarāyaṇa*) are on its ribs on its right side, but in the reverse order (i.e. from *Pūrvābhādrapadā* to *Māgaśīrṣa*). One should locate the remaining two, viz. *Śatabhiṣā* or *Śata-tārakā* and *Jyeṣṭhā* on its right and left shoulders.

7. (One should locate) the star *Agasti* on its upper chin and (the star called) *Yama* on its lower chin; the Mars in the mouth and the Saturn on its generative organ and the Jupiter on its hump, the Sun on its chest and *Nārāyaṇa* at the heart; the Moon in the mind; the Venus in the navel, the pair of Aśvinīkumāras on the nipples (of its chest), the Mercury in its inhalation and exhalation, (the shadow-planet) Rāhu at the throat and Ketus at all members of the body and the (remaining) stars all over the hairs of its body.

8. This is verily the manifestation of the form of glorious Lord Viṣṇu consisting of all gods. Silently and with concentration of mind one should watch it every evening and adore it with the following Mantra :

"We bow to the Supreme Personage, the Lord of all gods, (who assumed the form of) the Time Wheel, the support of all heavenly bodies, We meditate upon him."

9. This form of the Supreme God embodying all planets, constellations of stars and other heavenly luminaries washes off the sins of those who repeat the above Mantra three times (morning, mid-day and evening) a day. The sin committed in the past, present and future of a person who bows to him or remembers him three times a day is destroyed immediately.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

(Rāhu's Position and the Subterranean Regions)

Śrī Śuka continued :

1. According to some (experts in *Śāstras*) at a distance of ten thousand *Yojanas* below the Sun, Rāhu makes his revolution like a lunar mansion. Though himself a wretched Asura, a son of Simhikā, it was through the grace of the Lord that he attained the status of a planet, even though he did not deserve it. We shall describe his birth and deeds later on (in the VI and VIII Skandhas), Oh child.

2. They say that the sphere of the burning Sun is ten thousand Yojanas and that of Rāhu, thirteen thousand Yojanas. Rāhu continues to entertain a grudge against the Sun and the Moon since their interruption (in his opportunity of drinking nectar by exposing his demonic identity), and attacks them on full-moon and new-moon days.

3. Having come to know of it, the venerable Lord has deployed his favourite missile called Sudarśana by the sides of them both. Rāhu stands for a period of Muhūrta facing the discus of irresistible blazing splendour which constantly revolves round them (the Sun and the Moon). Overcome with sorrow, trembling with his heart full of fear, he goes back even from a distance. It is this occurrence that people call an eclipse.

4. Below that (region of Rāhu), at a distance of the same (ten thousand) Yojanas, lie the regions of Siddhas, Cāraṇas (Heavenly singers) and Vidyādharas (celestial artists).

5. Below these is the space serving as a sporting ground of the hosts of Yakṣas, demons, goblins, spirits (*pretas*) and ghosts. It ext ..ds downwards to the level where the wind blows or the clouds are met with.

6. Below that, at a distance of one hundred yojanas lies this earth up to the height to which the prominent birds such as swans, vultures, hawks, eagles and others are soaring.

7. Description of the earth with respect to its situation and arrangement (of its continents etc.) has already been

given (to you). Below the earth there are seven sub-terranean regions, each at a distance of ten thousand *Yojanas* from the other, and equally so (ten thousand *Yojanas*) in length and breadth. (Their names are :) Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talātala, Mahātala, Rasātala and Pātāla.

8. In these subterranean regions are veritable heavens. Therein reside Daityas, Dānavas and Serpents (sons of Kadrū) in extremely rich mansions, gardens, parks and play-grounds which surpass the heavenly world in their exuberance of sensuous enjoyments, affluence, joy and richness. They are householders whose affectionate wives, children, relatives, friends and servants always enjoy a highly delightful life. Their desires are never thwarted even by the lord of gods. They divert themselves with their skills in Māyā (miraculous powers).

9. Oh great King! Maya, (the architect) of miraculous powers has built cities in these regions. They (the cities) shine resplendent with wonderful mansions, defence-walls, gates, town-halls, temples, big quadrangles and houses constructed with excellent precious-stones of various types, and with palatial buildings of the lords of these subterranean regions, the terraces of which are teeming with couples of Nāgas (serpents) and Asuras (demons) and with pigeons, parrots and *sārikās*.

10. The gardens thereof also superbly excel the splendour of the land of gods, with their glorious beauty, giving delight to minds and senses :—Beauty of trees embraced by tender creepers, the branches of which (trees) are weighed down with clusters of flowers and fruits and lovely foliage of ponds and lakes full of translucent waters teeming with couples of various species of birds; (these are charmingly vocal) with the varied sweet warblings of birds that have made their homes in the beds of lilies, lotuses, Kalhāra—blue and red lotuses—and lotuses with hundred petals, in the water of those lakes (etc.) when they (waters) get agitated by the leaping of fishes—all these provide feast to one's senses.

11. It is said that here (in this netherworld) no fear is noticed (to have been caused) due to the divisions of time such as day and night.

12. The crest jewels on the hoods of great serpents dispel all the darkness there.

13. Due to the intake of herbs, saps, elixirs, food, drinks and bath of miraculous efficacy, the inhabitants of these regions do not suffer from mental worries and physical ailments. They are immune from wrinkles, grey hair and old age. Nor are they affected by paleness of body complexion, bad bodily odour, perspiration, fatigue, nervousness or bodily changes due to age (from childhood to old age).

14. These blessed souls have no fear of death from any source except from the Lord's power, called the discus (Sudarśana), the Lord's might.

15. When it (Sudarśana) enters those regions the embryos in the wombs of Asura women are miscarried or aborted through sheer terror.

16. Now in region called Atala resides the demon Bala, the son of Maya. The learned say that he has verily created ninetysix varieties of Māyā (magical tricks) sbme of which are still practised by jugglers. As he yawned, three groups of women—*svairiṇīs* (who enter into sexual intercourse with men of their caste), *kāminīs* (who copulate with men not belonging to their caste) and *Puṁścalīs* (the most fickle minded of the Kāminī group)—came forth from his mouth. They administer a liquid preparation called *Hāṭakarasa* to a man who enters their subterranean region and make him sexually capable. They give him amorous pleasure at their will indeed, by their sportive seductive smiles, lovely conversations, embraces, etc. When the elixir is imbibed, the man feels that he is a veritable god endowed with mystical powers and possessing the physical strength of ten thousand elephants. He goes aboasting like one mad (blind) with intoxication.

17. Below that (*Atala*), in the subterranean region called Vitala, dwells god Śiva, designated as Lord Hāṭakeśvara, surrounded by his retinue, the legions of goblins. With the object of multíplying the creation of Prajāpatis (proginators) he, under the name Bhava (the procreator), remains united with his divine consort, Bhavānī (Pārvatī). From him has issued the great river called *Hāṭakī* which is charged with the energy of them both. There, the Fire kindled by Wind, drinks

vigorously that water of the river. What is spit out by Fire is the gold called *Hāṭaka*. Males and females in the harem of the kings of Asuras wear that gold in the form of ornaments.

18. Below that (*Vitala*), in the region called *Sutala*, lives (the demon king) Bali, the son of Virocana of wide fame and hallowing renown. He was deprived of his sovereignty over the three worlds by Lord Viṣṇu who, with a desire to oblige the great god Indra, was born of Aditi and approached Bali, in the form of a dwarf celibate (*Brahmacārin*). It was by the Lord's grace that he was accommodated here, and is again blest with overflowing wealth and prosperity not possessed by Indra and others. Immune from all fears he even now continues to propitiate the most adorable Lord by performing his righteous duties.

19. It is not at all the direct result (fruit) of the donation of land (viz. three worlds) that Bali was blest with the sovereignty and fortune in the subterranean world : the gift that was duly given with absolute faith and devotion, with utmost reverence and perfectly serene mind to the glorious Lord Vāsudeva, the Supreme Soul, the principle of life and the inner controller of all species of living beings, the holiest and the most worthy recipient who has ever approached. Bali's donation was thus a gate-way directly leading to liberation (*Mokṣa*).

20. (The learned sages say) that if a person who while losing his control (and becoming helpless or unconscious) utters but once his name while sneezing, falling or tumbling down or in any such condition, he instantaneously cuts asunder the bonds of Karma, for removing which people desirous of attaining to the Final Beatitude, try various other means (except remembrance of his name and are not successful).

21. The sovereignty, prosperity etc. which implies mere worldly pleasure—*viṣayānanda*—cannot be the fruit of the bestowal of the Land, viz. three worlds on the Lord as it was given to the Lord as being his own Self—the Lord who is the Self of all beings and who dedicates his own Self to his devotees and to those who have realized him.

22. As a matter of fact, the Lord has not really confer-

red any favour on him[252] (i.e. Bali). He extended to him sovereignty, pleasures of senses which are of illusory nature and which, on the contrary, deprive him of the constant remembrance of Himself. (But Viṣṇu's presence near him as a door-keeper is the real fruit).

23. It is quite well-known that when it was found by the Lord that there was no other alternative (to deprive Bali of his sovereignty of the three worlds), He adopted the pretext of begging (three paces of land for sacrifice). When Bali was deprived of the sovereignty of three worlds (and had nothing with him) except his body, and was securely bound down with the cords of Varuṇa and was thrown into a mountain-den, he (Bali) actually exclaimed the following words:

24. "It is a pity that Indra, learned as he is, is certainly incapable of knowing his real interests—This Indra who has appointed the sage Bṛhaspati as an advisor to counsel him in all matters, ignored him[253], and instead of requesting for the service of the Lord (Upendra) begged for himself through the Lord (Vāmana or Upendra) my blessings viz., the sovereignty of the three worlds. (When the Lord is pleased, he is to be sought and not the worthless kingship of three worlds). Of what value is this Lordship of three worlds which terminates at the end of a *manvantara* which is quite an insignificant part of Time which is of infinite duration.

25. (Only my grand-father Prahlāda knew his real interest) for though after his father's (Hiraṇyakaśipu's) death, he was offered by the Lord (*Nṛsiṁha*) the throne of his father which had no danger from any quarters (then), my grand-

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252. *amuṣya*—this vague pronoun has confused the commentators. VC., VD., GD. think that this implies Indra and the translation will be : "Nor did the Lord confer any real favour on Indra, for he extended to him.....himself". Though ŚR. mentions no name after *amuṣya=amum* "him", his quotations from Parāśara.

Vāsudeve mano yasya japa-homārcanādiṣu /
tasyāntarāyo Maitreya, Devendratvādikam phalam //

probably hints at Indra which VD., VC., SD., GD. endorse. I think that in the present context *amuṣya* refers to Bali as interpreted by VR., J.G., & BP. as it is a continuous discussion about Bali. I however concede that *amuṣya*=Indra is not impossible though rather out of context.

253. VD.: Even that Bṛhaspati is not clever inasmuch as he did not advise Indra properly and etc.

father (Prahlāda) preferred his service only to the throne as he knew that it was something different from the Lord.

26. He (Prahlāda) was a noble Soul while a person like me has his passions unsubsided, nor is blessed with the grace of the Lord. How can such a person hope to approach the path trodden by him (Prahlāda)?''

27. His (Bali's) history will be narrated to you in details later on (in the VIII Skandha). At his (Bali's) door, the glorious Lord Nārāyaṇa, the Preceptor of the whole world (who hence deserves to be adored and not to be made to stand guard), whose heart is full of compassion for his devotees, stands with a mace in his hand. (It was) by him that Rāvaṇa (the ten-headed demon) who came there in the course of his expedition of conquering all the quarters (of the world), was kicked away to a distance of ten crores of Yojanas, simply by his toe.

28. Below that region (*Sutala*), in *Talātala*, dwells the king of Dānavas, by name Maya, the Lord of three cities. His three cities having been burnt down by the venerable Lord Śiva (the destroyer of the enemy cities or of the demon Tripura), with the desire to bring about the happiness of three worlds, he secured this position through his (Śiva's) grace. This great master of all experts in magic is protected in every respect by the great god (Śiva) and hence, being free from the fear of Sudarśana (Viṣṇu's discus), he is greatly respected (by the inhabitants of Talātala).

29. Below that, in the subterranean region *Mahātala*, there lives the tribe of many-hooded serpents called *Krodhavaśa*. Their prominent members are Kuhaka, Takṣaka, Kāliya, Suṣeṇa and others, all possessing huge bodies. They, however, live in fear of Garuḍa (the over-Lord of kings of birds), the vehicle of the Supreme Person. It is on a few occasions that they sport in company of their wives, children, friends and members of their families.

30. Lower still, in *Rasātala*, there dwell the descendants of Diti and Danu (the two wives of Kaśyapa, the proginator), called Paṇis who are also known as Nivātakavacas, Kāleyas and the residents of Hiraṇyapura. These enemies of gods are from their very birth, very powerful and daring in spirit. They live

like reptiles in holes as their arrogance of power is subdued only by the refulgent discus Sudarśana of the glorious Lord Hari whose majestic splendour spreads over all worlds. It is traditionally learnt that they are afraid of Indra due to the Vedic text uttered by the female dog, Saramā, the messenger of Indra[254].

31. Still lower down is the region called Pātāla. With Vāsuki as their king, there reside the chiefs of the Nāga (Serpent) race like Śaṅkha, Kulika, Mahāśaṅkha, Śveta, Dhanañjaya, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Śaṅkhacūḍa, Kambala, Aśvatara and others possessing extensive hoods and extremely impetuous by temperament. It is reported that the big effulgent crest jewels on the hoods of serpents possessing five, seven, ten, hundred and thousand heads, dispel by their splendour the mass of darkness in the hollow of the nethermost world (*Pātāla*).

CHAPTER TWENTYFIVE

(*Description of Saṅkarṣaṇa—the Serpent Śeṣa*)

Śrī Śuka said:

1. At the lowest extreme below Pātāla, at a distance of thirty thousand *Yojanas*, abides a part-manifestation of the Lord which is dominated by the *Tamas* only. It is also well-known as Ananta. Followers of the Sātvata School call it Saṅkarṣaṇa as, being characterised by ego and presiding over by 'I'-ness, it brings about the unification between the subject (the Seer) and the object (the seen).

2. This terrestrial globe, supported on one out of the thousand heads of the Lord who manifested himself as Ananta, appears like a mustard seed.

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254. ŚR. mentions the Vedic legend that when the Paṇis stole the cows and concealed them under water, Indra sent the female dog Saramā to trace them. She discovered them but when Paṇis tried to have a treaty type of understanding with her, she cursed them : *Hatā Indreṇa Paṇayaḥ Śayadhvam*—"Oh Paṇis ! Lie down (dead) slain by Indra !"

3. It is said that when He desires to withdraw (destroy) this world at the (predestined) time, from between his agitated eyebrows knit in wrath, yet charming, was manifested Rudra (god of destruction) called Saṅkarṣaṇa (one born of Saṅkarṣaṇa). He manifested his eleven forms, each three-eyed and holding a trident.

4. When the kings of serpents along with prominent devotees (Sātvatas) bow down with intense and unswerving devotion (his feet), they certainly look with an overjoyed mind, their most attractive faces with cheeks beautified with the splendour of their refulgent ear-rings, in the reddish, spherical nails, shining like rubies, on his pair of lotus-like feet.

5. Seeking blessings from him only, they say, that unmarried Nāga princesses besmear with pigment of *aguru*, sandal wood and saffron, his bright, long, fair-complexioned, beautiful, charming arms like silver-pillars, beautifully set up in the sphere of his beautiful body. Their minds being agitated with the touch of his body, they put on winsome smiles as the god of Love stealthily enters their hearts. They really cast bashful glances at his lotus-like face as his reddish eyes swim with inebriation and cast a merciful glance at them.

6. He is that very glorious Lord Ananta, the ocean of infinite excellences, the primeval Deity. Restraining the vehemence of His impetuosity and wrath (as it is inappropriate and unnecessary for the maintenance of the worlds), he abides for the well-being of all the worlds.

7. He is being contemplated upon by hosts of gods, demons, reptiles (Nāgas), Siddhas, Gandharvas, Vidyādharas and sages. Due to continuous exhilaration under intoxication his eyes were swimming restlessly. He was giving delight (lit. feeding) the leaders of His attendants and gods with his nectar-like winning speech. Clad in blue garments and wearing only one ear-ring, he has placed his blessed, beautiful hand on the top of (his special weapon) the plough. Just as the majestic elephant (Airāvata) of the great Indra is decorated with a girth of gold, the glorious Lord of gracious and beneficient deeds wears his *Vanamālā* (a wreath of forest flowers) called *Vaijayantī*[255], the

255. *Vaijayantī* wreath consists of the shoots of the *Tulasī* (Basil) plant, flowers of *Kunda*, *Mandāra*, *Pārijāta* and lotuses.

charm and gracefulness of which was heightend with the melodious humming of the bees inebriated with the sweet scented honey of fresh and new Tulasī blossoms of unfading beauty.

8. When this (Saṅkarṣaṇa) (as traditionally described by one's spiritual guide) is listened to and meditated upon, he enters the hearts of those who seek Liberation (from Saṁsāra). He instantly cuts asunder the knot of ignorance (avidyā), fored at (his devotee's) heart, due to the impressions created in the sub-conscience by the beginningless *karmas* and consisting of the attributes (or modes of Prakṛti) viz. *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. The venerable sage Nārada, the son of god Brahmā, accompanied by Tumburu (the famous celestial singer), described (in a musical composition his glorious prowess, in the assembly of god Brahmā.

9. Who can comprehend the way[256] (the truth) of the Lord (who is Brahmā himself)—the Lord by whose glance (i.e. desire to create) *sattva* and other attributes of Prakṛti[257] which are respectively the cause of the creation, preservation and destruction (of the universe) became capable (of executing their function); whose form is eternal (infinite) and beginningless, for One as he is, he contains in himself the universe characterised by many-ness.

10. Out of unlimited grace for us, he assumed a form consisting of (pure) *sattva* unalloyed with *rajas* and *tamas*, wherein appears the unmanifest and manifest[258] universe. The Lord who possesses unbounded energy like a lion, exhibited his faultless sports (e.g. creation of the universe etc.) for attracting the minds of his devotees.

Tulasī-Kunda-Mandāra-Pārijātāmbujais tu yā
Pañcabhir grathitā mālā Vaijayantīti kathyate ||

256. *vartman*—(i) The truth about—ŚR.
(ii) The working of—VJ.
(iii) The reality about or the way of attaining to—VC., GD.

257. VR., BP. note that the factual order implied herein is *rajas*, *sattva* and *tamas* as the creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe are mentioned in a series in the text.

258. *Sadasad* (*idam*) : (i) Intelligent and unintelligent—VR.
(ii) Subtle and gross—VJ.
(iii) Manifest and unmanifest.

11. Even if a person either in distress or fallen from the righteous path accidentally or in joke utters his name as heard (from the spiritual teacher or any other person), he instantly annihilates completely the sins of (other) men. Hence to whom else than the glorious Lord Śeṣa, will a man desirous of Liberation, resort ?

12. On one of the heads of the thousand-headed Lord lies like an atom, the terrestrial globe with all its mountains, rivers, seas and the living beings (inhabiting it), owing to the infiniteness of the immeasurable and innumerable exploits of the Almighty Lord, who can, even if endowed with a thousand tongues, hope to count completely all his herioc acts ?

13. Of such prowess is the glorious Lord Ananta. His energy and excellent attributes and potencies are limitless. Unsupported by anyone else, he stays at the bottom of the earth bearing it easily for the preservation and wellbeing of the entire creation.

14. These are, verily, the regions to be attained to by people desirous of enjoying pleasures. These are created to accord with their respective *karmas*. These are described to you as it was traditionally taught to me (by my preceptor).

15. Oh King! I have described to you according to your queries, these various, high and low regions attained by men as a fruit of the *karmas* performed by them. On what other topic should I discourse now?

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

(*Description of Hells*)

The King enquired:

1. Oh great Sage! How is it that there is such a diversity (in regions attained to by people) in the word?

The Sage (Śrī Śuka) replied:

2. The courses (and results) of *karmas* are varied according to the faith of the performer of the action which

differs according to the (dominance of) particular mode of *Prakṛti* (e.g. *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*) influencing him.[259] All these are attained (at different times) by everyone (in more or less degree according to the influence of a particular *guṇa*).

3. Thus in the case of perpetrators of unrighteous atcs of a prohibited character, the fruits according to them are of dissimilar nature according to the variety of the faith of the perpetrator. Now we shall describe in details (some prominent states out of) the thousands of hellish states which are the results of the (commission of) prohibited sinful acts committed by those who indulge in desires (of various kinds) due to the influence of *avidyā* (ignorance) dominating them from time immemorial.

The King asked:

4. Are the infernal regions some particular parts of this world ? Or are they somewhere outside the worlds or are they somewhere in the space inside these worlds ?

The Sage (Śrī Śuka) replied:

5. They (the infernal regions) are within the three worlds. They lie in the Southern direction below the earth and above the waters. And in this direction reside the groups of Pitṛs (manes) called Agniṣvātta and others. Meditating on God with utmost concentration, they continue to invoke auspicious blessings on their descendants.

6. It is reported that it is really true that the venerable, king of the manes (*pitṛ*), Yama (son of the Sun-god) who never violates any command of the Lord, dwells here along with his retinue. And to the departed souls brought to his region by his messengers he inflicts punishments in proportion and according to the gravity of the sin committed.

7. Some learned have enumerated that there are twentyone—hellish regions. Oh King, I shall now serially describe them to you according to their name, form (or function) and character (nature of the sin expiated.) They

259. Cf. the characteristics of the *sāttvic*, *rājasa* and *tāmasa* acts (BG. 18.23-25) and the three types of the performers of acts (BG. 18. 26-28).

are as follows: Tāmisra, Andha-tāmisra, Raurava, Mahā-raurava, Kumbhī-pāka, Kāla-sūtra, Asipatra-vana, Sūkara-mukha, Andha-kūpa, Kṛmi-bhojana, Sandaṁśa, Tapta-sūrmi, Vajra-kaṇṭaka-śālmalī, Vaitaraṇī, Pūyoda, Prāṇa-rodha, Viśa-sana, Lālābhakṣa, Sārameyādana, Avīci and Ayaḥ-pāna. Moreover, (there are seven in addition) viz., Kṣāra-kardama, Rakṣogaṇa-bhojana, Śūlaprota, Daṇḍaśūka, Avaṭa-nirodhana, Paryāvartana and Sūcimukha. These twentyeight infernal regions are the places where (*jīvas* are subjected to) tortures of various kinds.

8. The person who takes away another person's wealth, children or wife, is certainly bound down with mortal cords of death and is forcibly hurled into the Tāmisra hell by the terrible servants of Yama. In that hell of utter darkness, the being is subjected to various kinds of torment such as denial of food and water, belabouring with cudgels, holding out threats, and ultimately overcome with torment he instantaneously drops down unconscious.

9. In the same way, a person who enjoys the wife (property etc.) of another person by deceiving him, is thrown into the Andhatāmisra hell. Here the embodied being who is subjected to tortures loses his sight and consciousness due to torments, just like a tree the roots of which are being cut down. Hence they call this hell 'Andha-Tāmisra' due to its blinding effect.

10. Verily, he who wrongly identifies his body with his Soul and regards his wealth (wife etc.) as his own and every day contributes to the nourishment and comforts of his family by maliciously treating other beings, falls, after leaving his body etc. in this world, into the Raurava hell due to the sin (perpetrated in his malicious dealings).

11. The creatures which have been tortured and killed by him in this world, are born in the world as Rurus and while he (their murderer) undergoes torments inflicted by Yama, kill him in the same way (as done to them by him). *Ruru* is the name of a creature much more cruel than a serpent. Hence this hell is called Raurava.

12. Similar is the hell called Mahāraurava. He who is given solely to the nourishment of his body by any unscru-

pulous means etc.) enters this hell. Here the Rurus are *Kravyādas* (carnivorous, flesh-eaters) which kill him for the sake of his flesh.

13. In the hell, called Kumbhīpāka, the servants of Yama fry in boiling oil that hard-hearted man who cooked living beasts or birds in this world and was censured for his cruelty even by cannibals (or demons).

14. He who bears malice towards his parents, Brāhmaṇas and the Vedas is hurled into the hell called Kālasūtra. It is a plain of a copper-sheet ten thousand *Yojanas* in area. The sheet of copper is heated by fire from below and the Sun from above. The creature is being burnt within and outside his body by hunger-thirst. Due to restlessness, he sometimes sits, sometimes lies down and rolls and sometimes stands up and begins to run about. Thus he suffers for as many thousand years as there are hair on a beast's body.

15. They (servants of Yama) throw in the hell called *Asipatravana* (a forest of trees with sword-like leaves) a person who, while in this world, abandons his Vedic way of life even when there was no calamity and embraces a heretic sect. They strike him with a whip. And while he runs hither and thither (to avoid whipping), all the limbs of his body are cut down by the two-edged sword-like leaves of the palm trees thereof. Crying with excruciating pain, "Alas ! I am killed", he falls in a swoon at every step. A renegade from one's own faith he reaps the fruit (punishment) suitable for the sin of embracing a heretic creed.

16. In this world, verily, a king or a king's servant inflicts punishment on those who did not deserve it (being innocent), or subjects a Brāhmaṇa to corporal punishment, that sinful fellow falls into the hell Sūkaramukha in the next world. While his limbs are being crushed with very powerful hands like a sugarcane (in a crusher) in this world, he laments in a piteous tone and sometimes he becomes unconscious like innocent persons confined in jail by him (while) in this world.

17. But a person whose course of life in this world is prescribed by God and who is capable of understanding agony caused to others, causes pains to creatures whose feeding upon

human bodies is determined by God but which are incapable of being aware of causing pains to others, falls into the hell *Andhakūpa*. He is hated and troubled there by beings like beasts, deer, birds, reptiles, mosquitos, lice, bugs, flies and others. Being harassed on all sides in the darkness, his sleep and mental peace are disturbed. Being devoid of rest, he wanders in darkness even as the *jīva*, the embodied soul, lives restlessly in a diseased body.

18. A person who, without performing five daily great sacrifices[260] (prescribed for a householder) eats whatever comes to his lot without sharing that with others (stranger-guests, his elders, dependents etc.) is spoken of as (comparable to) a crow. After his death, he falls in the most wretched hell called *Kṛmibhojana*. There he is born as a worm in a pool of worms, of hundred thousand Yojanas in extent. Being himself preyed upon by worms, he continues to feed himself on worms. He who thus enjoys his earnings without offering (a portion of it) to others or to gods, subjects himself to these torments for as many years (one hundred thousand) as the Yojanas of the extent of that hell or till his sin is expiated.

19. He who, in this world, without being in (a justifiable) emergency or calamity, steals or robs by force the gold, jewels etc, of a Brāhmaṇa or of any other person, gets the skin of his body cut with red-hot iron balls or tongs by the servants of Yama in the other world, Oh King.

20. To a man who indulges in a sexual intercourse with a woman whom he should not have approached or to a woman who does so with a man unworthy of such an approach, the

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260. The following are the 'great sacrifices' enumerated in the *Manu-smṛti* 3.70-71 :

(1) *Brahma-yajña*—Propitiation of ancient seers-ṛṣis by teaching and learning of the Vedic lore

(2) *Pitṛ-yajña*—Propitiation of one's forefathers by offering libations of water or *Pitṛ-tarpaṇa*.

(3) *Deva-yajña*—Propitiation of gods by offering oblations in sacrificial fire.

(4) *Bhūta-yajña*—Offering a portion of one's meals to sub-human creatures.

(5) *Nṛyajña*—Sharing one's food with a stranger who by chance comes to the door for food or shelter (*atithi-pūjana*).

servants of Yama lash them with a whip and make the man or woman embrace the red-hot iron image of that woman or man respectively.

21. He who (indiscriminately) indulges in sexual intercourse with all (including sub-human beings) is placed on a silk-cotton tree with thorns of adamants in the hell (called *Vajra-kaṇṭaka Śālmalī*) in the next world, and is dragged (down on those thorns).

22. Those persons who are born as Kṣatriyas or officers of king who are of noble descent (and have joined the heretic sect) transgress the bounds of religion, fall into the (river) Vaitaraṇī after death. Those transgressors of the restrictions (laid down) in religion are being bitten (eaten) by the aquatic animals of that river which forms the moat of the infernal regions. They are not disunited with the Soul but are sustained with life by their sins. Remembering the result of their sin, they continue to be tormented in the river which carries a flood of excretion, urine, pus, blood, hair, nails, bones, fat, flesh and marrow.

23. Those who (though born in higher caste but) keep low-caste women, neglect purity, righteous conduct and self-discipline and shamelessly lead a beastlike life, fall after their death in (the hell called *Pūyoda* which is) a sea full of pus, excretion, urine, phelgm and dirt and eat nothing but these most detestable things.

24. The Brāhmaṇas and others who keep a pack of hounds and donkeys, find delight here in hunting and kill animals on occasions other than those prescribed in the *Śāstras*, become, after death, targets of the discharge of arrows by the servants of Yama who pierce them with arrows (in the hell named *Prāṇa-nirodha*).

25. Verily those hypocrites who kill beasts in sham sacrifices in this world, fall in the *Vaiśasa* hell in the next world. There the Lords of that hell torture them and finally cut them to pieces.

26. The sinful twice-born (*dvija*) who, being blind with passion makes his wife of his own caste drink his semen, is thrown in the next world in a stream of semen (in the *Lālā-bhakṣa* hell) and is made to drink semen.

27. In this world the dacoits (who loot the property of others), perpetrators of arson and poisoning—be they kings or king's servants and soldiers—plunder villages or caravans of merchants, servants of Yama (in the form of) seven hundred and twenty hounds with teeth like adamant voraciously eat them up when they die (and enter the *Sārameyādana*).

28. Again, a person who utters any lie at the time of deposing evidence, money-transactions (e.g. barter, sale, purchase) or donating a gift, enters after death a supportless hell called *Avīcimat*. In that hell, he is hurled down headlong from a (steep) mountain top one hundred Yojanas in height to a place with rocky surface appearing as water. Hence, it is called *avīci-mat* (A place with hard surface but appearing like water with ripples). His body is shattered to very small pieces but he does not die. He is again taken up and hurled down.

29. If a Brāhmaṇa or his (Brāhmaṇa) wife or anyone who has taken a sacred vow, drinks wine through mistake or if a Kṣatriya and a Vaiśya (who are not eligible to drink Soma) drink the Soma juice, they are taken to the hell (called *Ayaḥ-pāna*) where, the servants of Yama, pressing a foot on their bosom pour molten iron into their mouth.

30. If a person belonging to the lowest strata of the society does not duly pay respect to those that are superior in birth (heredity), performance of austerities, learning, righteous conduct, caste and stage of life, out of esteem for himself, he is as good as a dead (while alive). After death, he is hurled down with head downwards into the hell called *Kṣāra-kardama* where he is subjected to endless tortures.

31. (When) men who, in this world, verily propitiate (gods like Bhairava) by offering human sacrifice and the women eat the human victim so offered, the human beings so sacrificed become a battalion of demons (Rākṣasas) in the region of Yama (in the hell called *Rakṣo-gaṇa-bhojana*). There Rākṣasas torture their former slayers in many ways, cut them into slices with their axes like butchers, drink their blood, dance and sing merrily just as those who ate them (as human victims) did on the earth.

32. Those persons who, in this world, attract by means

of allurement innocent people in the forests or in villages and inspire confidence in them to come near and then torture them in various ways by transfixing them on an iron pike or by binding them with ropes even though they strongly desire to survive—such (cruel) persons after death, at the time of being tortured by Yama (in the hell called *Śālaprota*) are transfixed on iron pikes. When they are distressed with hunger and thirst, they are attacked and pecked on all sides by hellish birds like Kaṅka, Vaṭaka of sharp beaks. It is then they remember their own sins.

33. Those people who are of a ferocious nature like serpents, torment other beings in this world, they fall even after death in a hell called *Dandaśūka* where serpents with five and seven hoods (mouth) approach them and devour them like mice.

34. Those who actually confine living beings in dark holes, granaries or caves in this world, (the servants of Yama) in the other worlds shut them up into similar places (in the *Avaṭanirodhana hell*) full of poisonous fire and smoke.

35. A householder who in this world often gets angry with and looks with burning eyes at the guests who have arrived at his door, gets his sinful eyes forcibly plucked out by birds of adamantine beaks like vultures, crows, *kaṅka Avaṭa*.

36. If a person, in this world is proud of his wealth and full of egotism, looks askance at others and is suspicious about all, and if his heart and mouth are withered by the anxiety of the expenditure or loss of that wealth and if, without any peace of mind he guards his treasure like a goblin, after death he becomes transformed into a devil for he accumulates sin in earning, supplementing and preserving wealth. He falls into a hell called *Sūcīmukha*. There the servants of (Yama-) dharma, like tailors, stitch the body of this devil-like protector of wealth, on all sides.

37. Oh Protector of the earth ! There are hundreds and thousands of such and the like hells in the abode of Yama. Some of them have been described here and some are not. All persons following an unrighteous path, enter into them in due course. Similarly, those who follow (the path of) religion

enter elsewhere (in the heaven). They are again reborn to this world with some balance of sin and merit with them.

38. The path of *Nivṛtti* (cessation from worldly activities) has been propounded to you in detail at first[261]. Of this extent is the Brahmāṇḍa (egg-shaped universe) which is divided into fourteen regions in the Purāṇas. It is the grossest form of the glorious Lord Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Person. It comprises of the attributes of his Māyā (viz. *sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*). He who full of faith and devotion reads, listens to and recites to others this account as narrated by me, begets in him faith, devotion and pure intelligence and realizes the incomprehensible Supreme Self.

39. Having listened to the gross as well as the subtle form of the glorious Lord, a self-controlled person, after successfully concentrating the mind on the gross form, should gradually comprehend the subtle form by his intelligence.

40. Oh King ! In this way the disposition of the world with its divisions (*dvīpas*), sub-divisions (*Varṣas*), the rivers, mountains, the sky (aerial region), the seas, the nether-world, the subterranean regions, the quarters and the hells as well as the heavenly bodies and various regions have been described to you by me. It is the gross form of the Lord, the asylum of all species of beings.

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261. Viz. *Vaiśvānaram yāti* etc. in Supra 2.2.24—SR.

SIXTH SKANDHA

CHAPTER ONE

(The Story of Ajāmila)

The King (Parīkṣit) said :

1. The path of cessation from *karmas* (*nivṛtti*) has been already described in detail, by your respectable self, in the beginning.[262] By that path, Brahmā (i. e. the region of Brahmā) is gradually attained through different stages[263] (such as passing through the abode of fire-god etc.). The Liberation is attained along with god Brahmā.

2. And (you have also described in detail)—the path characterised by worldly activities (*pravṛtti*), the object of which is to attain happiness in heaven and other pleasures which are themselves the product of *guṇas*[264] and which, in the case of *jīvas*, not disassociated with *Prakṛti*[265], results in constant re-embodiment of the *jīvas* for repeated enjoyments of such pleasures.[266]

3. The various infernal regions which are characterised by unrighteousness (as their cause) have been described in detail (in the fifth Skandha). And the first period of Manu, (presided over and hence) named after Svāyambhuva Manu, has also been described (in the fourth Skandha).

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262. *Vide Supra* 2.2.24 in *Vaiśvānaraṁ yāti* and 3.32.5 in *Ye svadharmān na druhyanti.*

263. *Karma-yoga* : (i) Through the path of action (*Karma*), knowledge (*Jñāna*) and devotion (*Bhakti*)—VR.

(ii) Remembrance of the Lord, visualization of the various members of the Lord's Person and visualization of the full divine form—VJ.

(iii) Birth in a good family, residence at a holy place, association with saintly persons (S.D.)

(iv) *dhyāna* (contemplation), *dhāraṇā* (concentration) and *samādhi* (realization of identity with Brahman.) GD.

264. *traiguṇyaṁ svargādisukhaṁ tadeva viṣayaḥ prāpyaṁ yasya—ŚR.*

265. *alīna-prakṛteḥ—avinaṣṭa prakṛti Sambandhasya/—VR.*

266. *guṇa-saṅgaḥ—bhogārthaṁ dehārambha-rūpaḥ (yo mārgaḥ)*—ŚR.

4-5. The dynasty of Priyavrata and Uttānapāda and the life-stories of (both of) those kings (have been narrated by you). You have also described the (division of the earth in important) island-continents (*dvīpas*), their subdivisions (*varṣas*), oceans, mountains, rivers, gardens, the disposition of this spherical earth with reference to its divisions, their special characteristics and dimensions and also those of heavenly bodies and subterranean regions, as they were created by the Almighty Lord.

6. Oh illustrious holy sage ! Now be pleased to explain in detail, the way which may save a man from falling into the infernal regions of various unbearable tortures.

Śri Śuka said :

7. If a man does not perform expiation (as prescribed in the *dharma śāstra*), in this very life, for the sin committed by him with his thought, word and deed, it is said that he definitely goes to the hellish regions after death. And those regions of severe tormentations have been described to your honoured self by me.

8. Hence, before one is overtaken by death and not incapacitated in body (or while one is not entangled in difficulties) one should immediately (after the commission of the sin), try to atone for the sin, with a controlled mind, according to the gravity or simplicity of the nature of the fault, just as a physician expert in diagnosis of the disease, promptly adopts remedies or dosage of the medicine (according to the nature of the disease).

The King said :

9. In spite of the full knowledge that (commission of) a sin is against his interest as evidenced by what he has seen (viz. punishment meted out by the king for an offence) and has heard (for example internment in hellish region as described in Purāṇas), he loses the control over himself, commits it repeatedly after the act of expiation. Hence (under these circumstances), how can there be any (real) expiation at all, if the tendency to commit sins, persists.

10. Sometimes he refrains from committing a sin; on

other occasions, he does it again. Hence, I think that the act of expiation is meaningless like the washing of an elephant (which besmears its body with dust again after washing).

Śrī Śuka said :

11. It is not laid down that there is the total and final annihilation of sin by the action of expiation (such as bodily mortification), for only the ignorant (i.e those who wrongly identify body with the Soul) are eligible for it. (But as the ignorance about the Soul and non-Soul—*avidyā*—is not dispelled, the particular sin may be atoned for, and the man again relapses into sinful ways). Knowledge (i.e. self-realization) alone is the real expiation (as it removes the ignorance—*avidyā* which is the real root-cause of the sin).

12. Just as diseases do not attack a person who eats only wholesome food, (on the contrary they recede gradually if they had already affected that person), a person who observes regular spiritual discipline (e.g. penance) becomes, step by step, eligible for the *summum bonum* (which annihilates sin and leads to realization of the self), Oh King.

13-14. Through concentration of the mind and sense-organs, practice of (eightfold) celibacy, the control of the mind and external organs, charitable gifts, truthfulness, purity (both bodily and mental), the vows of non-violence etc. and observances like *japa* (muttering the sacred syllable OM), the wise (who bear with equanimity the pairs of opposites like pleasure and pain) who understand (real principles of) righteousness and are full of faith, rid themselves of the most grievous sin committed by thought, word or action, just as the fire destroys even a big cluster of bamboos.

15. Just as the Sun completely dispels the mist, a few persons absolutely devoted to Lord Vāsudeva, annihilate their sins thoroughly (from its very root of *avidyā*) merely through their unswerving devotion to the Lord (without performing penance etc. But the number of such devotees is scarce).

16. Oh King ! A sinner is not purified to that extent through performance of penance and expiatory acts as a person who has dedicated his life to Lord Kṛṣṇa (and regards Kṛṣṇa as

his last resort, without worrying over the punishment in hell) does so by rendering service to his devotees.

17. Certainly this path (of devotion) is the correct and the best one in this world, as it is blissful (annihilating all miseries), and quite safe (with no danger or fear from anything). Kindly-disposed and desireless devotees of Lord Nārāyaṇa are found on this path (to help one in need, but there is nobody to do so in the paths of knowledge and action).

18. Oh King of Kings ! Performance of all acts of expiation do not thoroughly purify a person who has set his face against Lord Nārāyaṇa, even as all the rivers (taken together) cannot purify a pitcher of wine.

19. Those who have even once in their life here, set on the lotus-like feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa, their mind which felt an attachment for (and not knowledge or complete comprehension of) his excellent qualities, have by this (very temporary attachment and devotion) performed all expiatory acts. And they never see Yama (god of death) or his servants with a noose in their hands, even in their dreams.

20. And on this topic, the learned one narrate (by way of illustration) this ancient legend consisting of a conversation between the messengers of Viṣṇu and those of Yama. Listen to it from me.

21. In (the city of) Kānyakubja (modern Kanauj), there lived a certain Brāhmaṇa called Ajāmila. He married a maid-servant and got polluted through his association with a female slave, and he neglected the pious way of life (including the religious duties prescribed for a Brāhmaṇa).

22. He maintained his family by adopting a reproachful way of life consisting of holding captives for ransom, gambling, committing frauds and thefts. That sinful fellow tortured creatures (before killing).

23. A long period consisting of eighty-eight years of his life thus elapsed in maintaining himself that way, and fondling the children of that Dāsa woman.

24. The old fellow (Ajāmila) had ten sons (by that woman). The youngest of them was a boy named Nārāyaṇa. He was extremely doted over by his parents.

25. He (Ajāmila) had set his heart on that sweet lisping child. The old man was highly delighted while witnessing the child's plays.

26. Bound by filial love for child, he used to feed it while he was eating, make it drink at the time of his drinking. In this way, the fool did not know that the hour of his death had arrived.

27. Thus, the ignorant Ajāmila led his life. When the time of death actually arrived, he thought of his young son called Nārāyaṇa.

28. (Then) he saw that three extremely terrible male figures with wry faces, and with the hair on their bodies standing erect, and with nooses in their hands, had come to take him away.

29. With his senses greatly agitated, he called out in a prolonged loud voice, his son named Nārāyaṇa who was absorbed in his play-things at a distance.

30. Having heard the repetition of the name of Lord Hari, their master, uttered by the dying man, the servants of Nārāyaṇa immediately rushed forward, Oh great King.

31. Angels of Viṣṇu (intercepted and) forcibly stopped the messengers of Yama who were dragging (the *jīva* of) Ajāmila, the husband of the maid-servant, from the interior of his heart.

32. Thus prevented (from carrying out their duty) the messengers of Yama demanded, "Who are you who thus defy the order of Yama, the god presiding over righteousness.

33. Whose servants are you ? Whence have you come ? Why do you prevent his being taken away ? Are you gods or demigods or are you some prominent Siddhas ?

34. (Please do not get offended for our ignorance about you). All of you have eyes like lotus-petals, wear yellow silken garments and are adorned with diadems, ear-rings and shining lotus garlands.

35. You are all in the full bloom of youth. All of you possess four beautiful arms. (Each of) you appears majestic with (your lustrous) bow, quiver, sword, mace (*gadā*), conch, discus and lotus.

36. By your personal splendour, you dispel darkness

from all quarters and out-shine the lustre of others. Why do you prevent us, the obedient servants of Yama, the protector of the moral law?"

Śrī Śuka said :

37. When the obedient servants (who execute the commands) of Lord Vāsudeva were asked thus by the messengers of Yàma, they laughed heartily, and replied as follows to them, in a voice deep like the thunder.

The Messengers of Viṣṇu replied :

38. If you are really the executors of the orders of the King of Righteousness, tell us what is the true nature of righteousness and what is the distinguishing character of Dharma.

39. How (on what principles) is punishment given? What (who) is regarded as the proper object? Who deserve punishments? Whether all of them are punishable or some of them?

Servants of Yama replied :

40. What is ordained in the Vedas is *dharma* or righteousness. What is against the prescription of the Vedas is *a-dharma* (*un*-righteousness). We have heard it traditionally said that the Vedas are Nārāyaṇa incarnate and they, being the breath (flowing out naturally from the nostrils) of the Lord[267] are self-existent.

41. It is the Lord (Nārāyaṇa) by whom all these living beings which are constituted of the attributes *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* and which are severally discriminated and distinguished by their qualities (e.g. quiescence), designations (Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya etc.), activities (study, teaching etc.) and forms (social classes, stages of life—*varṇas* and *āśramas*), are supported properly in his own Form (Being).

42. The Sun-god, the Fire-god, the Sky, the Wind-god, cows, the Moon-god, the twilights, days and nights, cardinal points, the presiding deities of Water and the Earth, Time and (the god) Dharma—all these are the witnesses (of the acts) of the embodied beings.

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267. Cf. *asya mahato bhūtasya niḥśvasitam etad yad Ṛgvedaḥ* /

43. (Acts of) unrighteousness as evidenced by these is judged to be the proper reason for awarding punishment. All the perpetrators of (evil) actions deserve punishment according to the nature of their acts.

44. Oh sinless ones! Actions, meritorious or sinful are being done by active persons as they are associated with attributes (like *rajas*, *tamas*). For nobody invested with a body can be actionless.

45. The same person enjoys the fruit of the same sinful or a meritorious act in the next world in the same manner and to the same extent according to the manner and extent to which that (sinful or meritorious) act has been done by him in this world.

46. Oh great gods ! (As you know it by your omniscience) Just as here (in this world) there is found a three-fold variety[268] in living beings due to the diversity in the peculiar qualities (or mixtures of *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* attributes exhibited in their pious, sinful or mixed acts), the same may be inferred about them in the next birth[269]. (Otherwise such a diversity cannot be explained).

47. Just as the present period of time is the index of the characteristics of the other periods that precede and follow it[270], similarly the present life (of human beings, prognostically) indicates the righteous and sinful actions committed in the past and (likely to be committed) in the future existences as well.

48* Staying in his own capital (Saṁyaminī), the god Yama-dharma clearly visualizes by his mental power, the pre-

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268. ŚR. states that this is the *arthāpatti* (circumstantial inference) to explain re-birth. He explains the three-fold variety as follows :

1) of quiet, ferocious or dull nature.

2) experiencing a happy, miserable or mixed type of life.

3) of righteous, vicious or mixed nature.

According to VJ., they are the best, worst and middle types of beings according to dominance of guṇas—*sattva*, *tamas* and *rajas*.

269. In the next world.—VR.

270. Just as the present season, e.g. the spring indicates the characteristics regarding flowers, fruits etc. of the past and future Spring-seasons.—ŚR., VJ.

*(i) ŚR. : The Inner Controlling Self (*antaryāmin*) staying in the city in the form of body etc.

(ii) VR. thinks that this verse refers to the Supreme Soul who stays as *antaryāmin*.

(iii) VJ. : Lord Nārāyaṇa staying in the body of the living beings, sees the past and future form, as also the merits and sins of the *Jīva*.

vious form (e.g. god, sub-human being or the merits, sins etc.) of the *jīva* (departed Soul), and deeply reflects what the *jīva's* future state should be, by his reasoning capacity; for his Lordship is omniscient like god Brahmā.

49. Just as a sleeping person in the dream-state regards that he is identical with the body manifested in the dream, and does not know his body in the pre-dream state or the body to be assumed in the next dream, similarly the ignorant *jīva* conditioned by *avidyā* knows his present body as manifested by the actions of his previous existence and not the previous form assumed in the past incarnation nor the future body (of his future existence) due to the loss of memory of his past lives.

50. With five conative organs, the *jīva* carries out his (physical) functions (e.g. locomotion, exchange); with five cognitive senses, he perceives (knows) the five objects of senses. The single *jīva*, the seventeenth, combined with the sixteenth, i.e. the mind[271] experiences all alone, three-fold objects presented by the cognitive senses, conative organs and the mind.

51. This subtle-body (*liṅgam*) constituted of the sixteen parts (enumerated above) and possessing three potencies (of the attributes *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*) is beginningless. It continues to hold down a man in *saṁsāra* which gives him joy, grief, fear and sufferings.

52. The ignorant embodied being who has not subdued the group of six (viz. five cognitive senses and the mind is forced (by his subtle body) to perform actions despite his unwillingness. Like a silk-worm covering itself in its cocoon, he covers (entangles) himself in the net of *karmas* and fails to see the way out.

53. Verily, nobody can ever remain actionless even for a moment; for everyone is helpless and is forced to do some act by passions like attachments etc. born of (the three) attributes (viz. *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*) which are the results of the impressions of past actions.[272]

(iv) SD. : It is the Supreme God (*Parameśvara*) abiding in the body yet unaffected by birth etc. connected with the physical body, dispenses the fruits of merits and sins through god Yama and he never interferes.

271. And the other fifteen constituents are the ten sense-organs, five subtle *bhūtas* forming the bases of objects of senses—ŚR.

272. This is *verbatim* the same as BG. 3.5

54. With *avyakta* (unmanifested destiny—*adṛṣta*) as the instrumental cause, the gross physical body and the subtle *liṅga-śarīra* are formed. According to the powerful impulses of the *jīva*, he becomes moulded like his mother's form or like his father's personality.

55. This contrary state of the *Puruṣa* (viz. involvement of the (*puruṣa* into *saṁsāra*, miseries suffered despite the Soul's blissful nature, due to his false identity with his body) was due to the contact with *Prakṛti*. It (this contact) dissolves completely within a short time through his devotion to God.

56. This (Ajāmila) was really studied in the Vedic lore; (was) the very abode of good nature, righteous conduct and virture; was a strict observer of vows, gentle, self-controlled truthful, master of mystical formulae, pure (both in mind and body).

57. He used to serve his preceptors, the sacred fire, the guests and elderly relatives advanced in age. He was untouched by pride (full of humility), a friend to all living beings, a man of few words; he was a saintly person, not jealous of anyone.

58. One day, this Brāhmaṇa who obediently used to carry out his father's orders, went to the forest. He returned therefrom taking with him fruits, flowers, sticks for sacrificial fire and *Kuśa* grass.

59-60. On his way back, he saw a certain shameless, libidinous Śūdra who had drunk wine (called *Maireya*—distilled from meal) in the company of a harlot whose eyes were also swimming due to intoxication. With that woman who was standing by him, with the knot of her *Sari* loosened (hence in a semi-naked condition), the shameless Śūdra was courting, and singing and joking nearby.

61. Seeing her embraced in arms which were erotically painted with unguents, Ajāmila was instantaneously infatuated and succumbed to passionate love.

62. Despite his attempts to control himself with all (the power of) his reasoning capacity and scholarship, he was unable to stabilize his mind and calm down his heart, which was agitated by the god of Love.

63. Being possessed by the devil in the form of passionate

desire for her, he lost (the balance of) his mind. Brooding over her in his mind, he desisted from performing his prescribed religious duties.

64. With his entire ancestral property, he tried to propitiate her by vulgar carnal pleasures (appealing to her) so that she may be pleased with him.

65. The sinful fellow whose judgment was paralysed by the side-glances of that wanton woman, soon abandoned his regularly wedded young Brāhmaṇa wife who was born in a good family.

66. This stupid fellow (after squandering his ancestral property) got money from any place, by fair means or foul, and maintained the family of this woman (now his housewife).

67-68. Inasmuch as this fellow violated all the Śāstric injunctions and led a licentious life censured by noble persons, and lived a sinful life for a long time in an impure condition and eating dirty (polluted by a harlot's touch) food, we (servants of Yama-dharma) shall therefore carry this sinner who did nothing for expiating his sins, to the presence of Yama (the god wielding the rod of punishment). There he will get purified through (undergoing the prescribed) punishment.

CHAPTER TWO

(Exposition of the Bhāgavata Dharma; Efficacy of the Lord's Name and Ajāmila's Ascension to Viṣṇu-loka)

Śrī Śuka said :

1. Having thus carefully heard the exposition addressed (to them) by the messengers of Yama, the angels of Lord Viṣṇu who were pastmasters in philosophy and ethics, replied to them, Oh King.

The messengers of Viṣṇu said :

2. Oh What a pity ! Injustice (or unrighteousness) influences the assembly of those who should see through (the real

nature of (righteousness. There, punishment is wrongly inflicted by these (custodians of righteousness) on persons who are not sinners and do not (hence) deserve it.

3. To whom can created beings go for a shelter, if injustice particularly enters into their fatherly protectors and teachers like rulers who are expected to be well-disposed, righteous and impartial ?

4* Whatever a superior person does is emulated by other common people. Whatever he sets up as a standard or regards as an authority the masses (ordinary people) follow it.

5. A common man, like unto a brute, does not understand, of his own accord, what is righteousness and unrighteousness. Placing his head confidently on the lap (of a fatherly protector like Yama-dharma), he sleeps resting without any anxiety.

6. How is it proper that if the latter is really deserving of confidence of all beings and has some compassion (and scruples), he can be so treacherous to one who has completely surrendered himself in faith, and cherishes friendship, and is unaware (verging on unconsciousness).

7. That this man (Ajāmila), even in a helpless stage uttered the name of Hari which (not only expiates sins but) leads to the Final Beatitude, has atoned for all the sins committed by him even in crores of his past incarnations.

8. For, by the very act that he uttered the four syllables NĀ—RĀ—YA—ṆA (while calling his son 'Oh Nārāyaṇa come'), this sinner has already completely atoned for all his sins.

9-10** A thief, a wine-drinker, perpetrator of treachery to one's friend, a murderer of a Brāhmaṇa, one who violates his preceptor's bed (i.e. has illicit relation with one's preceptor's wife), the slayer of a woman, a king, a parent or a cow and other types of sinners—to all these sinners, the utterance of the name of Viṣṇu is the most effective expiation, for Lord's

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* A verbatim quotation from BG. 3.21.

** VR. and VC. write long discourses on the importance of God's name which may be read in the original. V.J. points out that the condition precedent is that the name of the Lord is to be uttered with ardent devotion.

mind gets attracted to the sinner uttering his name (or the sinner's mind is attracted to the Lord).

11. A sinner is not so thoroughly purified to that extent, by performing the expiatory acts and observances of vows prescribed by the masters of the Vedic lore (like Manu and others), as by the utterance of the mere syllables of the names of Hari (without adding 'I bow to'), as his name is suggestive of the excellences of the glorious Lord. (The effect of Lord's name does not exhaust and disappear immediately after dispelling the sin as is the case with the penances like *Kṛcchra* and *Cāndrāyaṇa*.[273]

12. For if the mind again runs (is attracted) to the evil path even after going through the process of expiation, that act of atonement is not thorough (in destroying sin). For those who desire to annihilate (the effects of) their (sinful) acts, repeatedly extolling the merits (by uttering the names) of Hari is the sure remedy, as it (actually) purifies the mind.

13. Hence, do not carry him (the *jīva* of Ajāmila) by the wrong way (the sinner's path leading to Yama's abode). He has completely expiated all his sins. (When even a syllable of the Lord's name is sufficient to annihilate all sins), he has uttered the complete name of the Lord when he was about to die (and there is no time and hence possibility of committing a sin after articulating the Lord's name).

14. (As to the objection that Ajāmila called his son and and not Viṣṇu, Viṣṇu's messengers explain). The experts in *Śāstras* say that utterance of the Lord's name even if taken to denote another person, or in a friendly joke or as an insertion during the recitation of a song, or in (an outward, apparent) disrespect[274], completely annihilates all sins.

15. If a person unconsciously (and involuntarily) utters the Lord's name (Hari or any other) while he falls, tumbles down, gets maimed, is bitten (by a serpent), heated (by fever etc.) and struck (by a stick), he does not deserve to be tormented in hell.

16. (Proportionately) heavy (difficult) and easy processes of atonement for sins of grievous and light natures have

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273. VC. adds—This is the omnipotence of the Almighty Lord.
274. But real disrespect for God's name is a great sin.

been thought over and laid down by the great sages (like Manu and other writers on the *Dharma-Śāstra*). (But there is no such differentiation in case of Lord's name, as by merely remembering Lord Viṣṇu, one is absolved of all sins).

17. Those (different kinds of) sins are washed away by the austerities, charitable acts, mutterings (of prayers or *mantras*) and such other (expiatory) processes. But the heart of the sinner (or the subtle residual forms of the sins called impressions or *saṁskāras*) are not thereby purified. Even that is achieved by the service of the feet of the Lord. (All the sins are annihilated by the very name of Hari, but *vāsanā* or the impressions unconsciously left on the mind by past actions are wiped out by the vision of Lord Viṣṇu—the Great Man etc.).

17a*. This Dharma, characterised by the repetition of the name of the Lord, is the highest and the ancientmost, and has been thus laid down. If practised, it purifies the mind day by day, like clothes washed on every day.

17b*. As the individual soul (*jīva*) has no independence in relation to the acts he performs, the expiatory acts cannot completely purify the *jīva's* mind (due to his dependence on God's will). Desisting from forbidden acts, he should therefore worship Hari by continuous singing and repetition of his name.

18. Irrespective of a man's knowledge or ignorance (about the efficacy and potentiality of the Lord's name for purifying thoroughly all the sins), if Lord Viṣṇu's name is sung or muttered repeatedly, it burns down all the sins of man, like fire (even though ignorantly thrown by a child on a heap of fuel) burns the fuel completely.

19. Just as a medicinal drug of the highest potency, even though taken by chance, without being aware of its efficacy, is bound to show its remedial effects, similarly the sacred formula (*mantra*) consisting of the Lord's name, even when muttered by chance, without knowing its highest purificatory power) shows its efficacy (in annihilating all sins). (Inherent power or potency does not require faith etc. in showing its efficacy).

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*17a & 17b are additional verses in VJ's text.

*19a. Oh messengers (of Yama)! If you still entertain any doubt about the righteousness (of this), you consult (enquire) with your Lord, for the glorious god Yama knows the most secrets of (what is the real) *Dharma*.

Śrī Śuka said :

20. Oh King! Having thus logically and convincingly explained the path of the Lord (the *Bhāgavata dharma*) and after liberating him (Ajāmila's *jīva*) from the noose of Yama, they (Viṣṇu's messengers) got him released from (the clutches of) Death.

21. The messengers of Yama who were thus (discomfited and) expelled, approached god Yama and faithfully reported the whole matter to King Yamadharma, Oh vanquisher of enemies!

22. Being completely extricated from the noose of Yama, the Brāhmaṇa overcame his fear, and became his own former normal self.[275] Feeling delighted at their sight, he bowed to the servants of Viṣṇu with his head.

23. Perceiving that he was desirous to speak to them, the servants of Lord Viṣṇu instantaneously disappeared on that very spot, while he (Ajāmila) was (simply) looking on, Oh sinless King.

24. Ajāmila also heard separately from the conversation of the messengers of Yama and of Viṣṇu (Kṛṣṇa), the (ritualistic) Dharma as propounded in three Vedas and based on *guṇas* (as the fruit of this Dharma, viz. celestial pleasures are a product of *guṇas*), and also the Pure Dharma pertaining to (and consisting of absolute devotion to) the Lord, and transcending the three *guṇas*.

25. Having heard the great glories of Lord Hari, he immediately conceived earnest devotion to the Lord. Remembering his evil past, he felt deeply remorsed.

26. "Alas! How extremely deplorable it was of me who could not subdue my (lower) Self, and procreating myself in the form of sons from a Śūdra woman, I have desecreted my Brahminhood.

* An additional verse in the text of VR. and VJ.

275. Resumed his previous pious way of life.—VJ.

27. Fie upon me who am condemned by good people as a sinful wretch, a dark stigma on my family—I who abandoned my virtuous young wife, and went to an unchaste wench given to drinking.

28. Alas! An ungrateful vile fellow that I am, I have forthwith deserted my supportless, poor, aged, afflicted parents who had no relative to protect them.

29. I, who am of that nature, shall obviously fall into that terrible-most hell wherein lustful violaters of the path of righteousness undergo tortures inflicted by Yama.

30. Was this a dream or was it a reality that I witnessed a miracle here? Where have the noose-bearers who dragged me (out of my body) today, gone now?

31. Again, where have gone those four beautiful-looking Siddhas (demi-gods) who released me while I was being taken noose-bound, down to the subterranean (infernal) regions?

32. In spite of my being a wretched person (in this birth), there must have been some auspicious (deed done in previous birth) inasmuch as I had the vision of those foremost gods and due to which my mind feels serene and peaceful now.

33. Otherwise (but for such auspicious acts in my previous birth) the tongue of an impure, sinner like me who kept a Śūdra woman, could be capable of uttering, at the time of death, the name of Lord Viṣṇu.

34. Oh! What a contrast between a shameless rogue and a sinner like me! I have violated (destroyed) my Brāhmaṇahood and the auspicious name of the Lord 'Nārāyaṇa'.

35. Though I be such, I who have controlled my mind, cognitive and conative organs and breath, shall endeavour that way whereby I shall not plunge myself in the blinding darkness in the form of transmigration of the Soul.

36. Having freed myself from the bonds (for household and relatives) due to *avidyā* (wrong identification of the body with the Soul), lust (for enjoyment of pleasures) and actions (binding the doer to this world and the next), I shall be a friend to all beings, serene, friendly, compassionate and self-controlled.

37. I shall liberate myself who am completely possessed

by Lord's Māyā in the form of a woman (my Śūdra keep) by whom, wretched as I was, I was made to dance and play like a deer kept for amusement.

38. Having given up the notion of 'I' and 'mine' with reference to my body, (belongings, property etc.) and with my thought concentrated on the real substance, I shall fix my mind on the Lord. My mind has been purified by singing of the name of the Lord (and other modes of *bhakti*)."

Śrī Śuka said :

39. In this way, through a moment's association with the pious (servants of Viṣṇu), he felt a thorough aversion to worldly life (and its pleasures) and freeing himself from all ties (to his mistress, children and property), he proceeded to Gaṅgādvāra.

40. Settling down in that sacred place (the abode of God), he betook himself to (the path of) Yoga. He withdrew (from worldly pleasures) all his senses and organs, and concentrated his mind on the self.

41. Then, he dissociated his self from (the product of) the *guṇas* viz. the body, sense-organs etc., and by concentrating his mind, he fixed it on the Supreme Brahman, which is the essential form of the Lord and is the embodiment of consciousness, and bliss.

42. When his mind and intellect were thus (thoroughly) stabilised in the Brahman, the Brāhmaṇa visualized before him those very male figures (messengers of Viṣṇu), and recognizing them as those as having been seen before, he stood up and bowed down his head (to pay respect).

43. After that vision, he cast off his body at the sacred place (Haridvāra) in the Gaṅgā and immediately assumed the (angelic) form of the attendant of the Lord.

44. Along with the servants of Lord Viṣṇu, the Brāhmaṇa ascended the heavenly car made of gold and proceeded through heavens to the abode of the Lord of Śrī (i.e. Viṣṇu).

45. (Ajāmila), the husband of the maid-servant (of a low caste), who had thereby deluged (violated) all religious duties and flouted his vows (of fidelity to his wife etc.) and had (thus) fallen from Brāhmaṇahood by his reprehensible acts (like stealing) and was consequently being hurled into the hell

(by Yama's servants), was released (from the noose of Yama) the very moment he uttered the name of the Lord.

46. There is no better efficacious remedy to cut down the roots of sin, for persons wishing *Mokṣa* (Liberation from *Saṁsāra*) than the continuous chanting of (the glories and) the name of the Lord of hallowing feet (god Viṣṇu). By having recourse to remembrance (and repetition) of the Lord's name, the mind is not attached again to acts (*karmas*); but by any other (expiatory) acts (except the chanting of the Lord's name) it becomes tainted with *rajas* and *tamas*.

47-48. He who listens with deep faith and reverence this esoteric legend which is capable of destroying (all) sins and he who devoutly recounts it (to others), never, verily, goes to hell, nor is even eyed by the servants of Yama. Howsoever inauspicious (and sinful) the mortal may have been (in this world) he is greatly honoured in the region of Viṣṇu.

49. By (merely) calling out the name of Hari addressed to his son at the time of his own death, (even a sinner like) Ajāmila attained to Lord Viṣṇu's abode. What should be said of a person who takes his name with faith and devotion. (He would certainly ascend to Viṣṇu's abode).

CHAPTER THREE

(Yama explains Viṣṇu's greatness)

The King asked :

1. What did the god Dharmarāja (Yama, the presiding deity of righteousness), to whose authority this world is subject, and whose order was thus flouted by the servants of Viṣṇu (Murāri) reply to his servants, on hearing their report of that incident ?

2. Oh Sage ! The quashing of the penalty or order of god Yama was never heard of at any time or from any person. It is my firm conviction, Oh Sage, that nobody else than you, can clear this doubt in the popular mind.

Śrī Śuka said (in reply):

3. Oh King ! The servants of Yama whose attempts (to execute Yama's order) were foiled by the messengers of Viṣṇu represented to their Lord Yama, the master of the city of Saṁyaminī.

Yama's messengers said :

4. Oh Lord ! How many controllers are there of the world of living beings who perform three types of action (meritorious, sinful and mixed)? And how many are there who can dispense (lit. are the cause of the manifestation of) the fruits thereof?

5. If there be a number of rulers invested with the powers to dispense justice (lit. wielding the rod of punishment) who would (i.e. nobody would) suffer death, i.e. the result of sin leading to hell or enjoy nectar (i.e. the fruit of merit conferring celestial happiness) [in case these rulers of the world disagree], and who would not suffer both, i.e., hell and heaven, (in case they agree, one condoning an act and conferring heavenly bliss, and the other condemning the same act and dispensing suffering in hell, and both consenting to each other's decision).

6. (It may be argued that there is no hitch, if several rulers dealing severally with the acts of these large numbers of beings are postulated. But in the case of postulating a plurality of rulers for dealing with vast numbers of beings engaged in multifarious activities, rulership will be (reduced to) nominal formality like that invested in tributary princes under an emperor (the real absolute ruler being different).

7. (Due to the untenability of plurality of controllers) you are, therefore, (according to us) the only one Supreme ruler of all beings including the gods. You are the sole controller and the judge to decide the good and evil actions of beings and the dispenser of reward and punishment (lit. wielder of the rod of justice to award heaven and hell).

8 Such as you are, your authority (lit. awarding of punishment) is null and void and has ceased to exist in the world today; for your order has been superseded (lit. tricked off) by four wonderful Siddhas (demi-gods).

9. While, in compliance of your order, a sinner was being taken by us to the torture-houses (infernal regions), they perforce cut asunder your nooses (fastening the sinner) and liberated him.

10. As soon as the word 'Nārāyaṇa' was uttered (by the sinner), they hastened in saying, "Do not be afraid". So we wish to know from you who they are, if you think it is in our interest to know them (otherwise by showing disrespect to them through ignorance, there may be a trouble to you).

Śrī Śuka said:

11. Thus enquired, god Yama, the controller of all created beings was pleased, and calling upon mentally, the lotus-like feet of Hari, replied to his messengers.

Yama said:

12. Quite different from me is the Supreme Ruler of the mobile and immobile creation. (Who transcends it. As his servant, I control the mobile beings, especially the human beings among them and more especially the sinners among men, while he is the Supreme Ruler of all). Into him the universe lies woven warp and woof, like a piece of cloth. It is from his parts (*aṁśas* viz, gods Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra) that the creation, sustenance and destruction of the universe take place. The whole world remains under his perfect control like a bullock controlled by a string pierced through its nostrils.

13. Just as one keeps bullocks tethered together to a long rope, he binds people to his word (viz. the Vedas) by designating them (into classes as Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas etc.) and prescribing to each his respective duties. These people who are thus tightly regulated by their denominations and duties are afraid of him and bear him worship (by scrupulous performance of their prescribed work).

14-15. I (and the guardian deities of other cardinal points like) the great Indra, Nirṛti, Varuṇa, the Moon-god, the Fire-god, God Śiva, the Wind-god, as also the Sun-god, Brahmā, the (twelve) sons of Aditi (the monthly rotational solar presidents during a year), the Viśve-devas, the (eight) Vasus, demi-gods called Sādhyas, the (fortynine) Wind gods,

the group of (eleven) Rudras along with the Siddha tribe of demi-gods, and other progenitors of the universe (like Marīci), rulers of gods (i.e. ruler-like highly respected persons like Bṛhaspati), Bhṛgu and others who are not tainted with *rajas* and *tamas*—all these though dominated by the attribute *sattva* but are touched (deluded) with his Māyā do not understand his intentions—What of others? (Others can never fathom it).

16. *Jīvas* (individuals) verily cannot visualize him or comprehend him by means of their cognitive senses, mental faculties or vital breaths (which actuate the conative organs) or by means of speech (or Śāstras composed of words) even though he exists within their hearts and pervades them all (as the inner controller), even as the forms (which are the objects of the sight) cannot visualize the faculty of vision (which reveals them). He is beyond them all.

17. Generally, the messengers of Hari, the Supreme Soul, the self-dependent Supreme Ruler, the transcendent Lord of the Māyā go about in this world. They have attractive personalities and the same form, attributes and disposition as of their Lord.

18. The messengers of Viṣṇu are worshipped by gods. Their most wonderful forms cannot be easily perceived. They protect the mortal devotees of Viṣṇu from enemies, from me and from all (sides and people) as well.

19. The (secret of the) doctrine as enunciated by the Lord himself could not be comprehended by (persons dominated by the attribute *Sattva* like the sages, gods and prominent *Siddhas*. How can it be understood by demons and men—much less by demi-gods like Vidyādharas and Cāraṇas.

20-21. We twelve—god Brahmā, (the heavenly sage) Nārada, god Śiva, Sanatkumāra, Kapila (the founder of the Sāṅkhya doctrine), Manu, Prahlāda, Janaka, Bhīṣma, the demon Bali, Śuka (the son of Vyāsa) and we ourselves—know the essence of the Dharma (the esoteric doctrine) as expounded by the Lord. It is extremely sacred, pure, secret and difficult to comprehend. One who knows it attains immortality (Final Liberation—Mokṣa).

22. That alone has been remembered (prescribed in the

Dharma Śāstra) as the highest Dharma (sacred duty) of all men in this world, viz., that they should cultivate devotion unto the Lord through the utterance of his name (and other forms of *bhakti*).

23. Look at the great efficacy of the utterance of Hari's name, my boys. It is due to that, that even (a great sinner like) Ajāmila was rescued from the clutches (lit. noose) of death.

24. That even a great sinner like Ajāmila, while on the point of death (when one's faculties could not be concentrated on the Lord), simply shrieked out (and not devotionally chanted) for his son (and not for Lord Viṣṇu) as 'Nārāyaṇa' and attained Liberation shows that (mere utterance of Lord's name—*nāmābhāsa*—is enough to annihilate all sins and that glorification of the Lord's attributes and deeds and chanting of the Lord's name—all these are not required for mere destruction of the sins (but they are needed for cleanly wiping out the impressions (*vāsanās*) left over by sins.

25. (As this esoteric doctrine was grasped by only a dozen persons and remained a great secret to others, these great men) like Manu(most probably did not know that) the (efficacy of Lord's name) is this (as described above). Alas! Their mind is sufficiently deluded by the goddess Māyā. Their intellect is focussed on (and entangled in) the three Vedas promising in flowery language attractive fruits (of sacrifices and other rituals). And they engage themselves in great exhibitory performances of sacrificial acts. (The exhibitory attraction of sacrifices as contrasted with the chanting of the Lord's name in a solitary place, or due to their lack of faith in the efficacy of the Lord's name leads people to performance of sacrifices etc.

26. Having reasoned in this way, persons of good intelligence certainly perform with concentrated mind, acts (such as chanting of the Lord's name etc.) conducive to the loving devotion to the Lord of infinite attributes. They do not deserve punishment at my hands (as they are sinless). Even if sin is committed (inadvertently) by them, it is destroyed by their singing the glory and chanting the name of the Lord (who is widely sung by the Vedas).

27. Do not (even) approach those good souls who have resorted to the Lord and entertain equal outlook toward all and whose holy stories are (therefore) sung by gods and Siddhas. For they are protected by the mace of Hari and neither we nor the Time-spirit is competent to punish them.

28. Bring (only) those wicked persons who are averse to the sweet fragrant honey of the lotus-feet of Mukunda (Lord Viṣṇu) which is incessently tasted by multitudes of Paramahaṁsas (ascetics of the highest order, or noble Swans) who possess nothing of their own and are expert connoisseurs of sweetness (of Lord's lotus-feet). Bring also those who have set their hearts on their households, which is the way to hell.

29. Bring those fellows (to me) whose tongue does not describe the excellent attributes of the Lord or utter his name; whose mind does not remember his lotus-like feet; whose head does not even once bow down to Lord Kṛṣṇa and who have rendered no service to Lord Viṣṇu.

30. May the Venerable Lord Nārāyaṇa, the Ancient-Person, pardon me for the offence committed by my men who are his men. For his devotees who are ignorant, folding of palms in reverence to the great persons is the way of requesting forgiveness. I bow to the perfect Person."

31. The singing of Viṣṇu's name and glory is, therefore, auspicious and blissful to the whole world. Oh King of the Kuru race ! Please understand this to be a thorough expiation of the greatest[276] of sins.

32. The mind is not purified to that extent by observance of vows (e.g. fasting) as it does by the properly-developed devotion of those who constantly listen to and sing of the great exploits of Lord Viṣṇu.

33. He who has tasted the sweet honey in the lotus-like feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa does not find pleasure again in objects offered by Māyā which he has contemptuously discarded as leading to sin and miseries (of hell). But the other person who is ignorant about the blissfulness of devotion is overcome with passions, desires to wipe out the sin in his heart by performing

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276. *mahatām*—Or 'Of great persons'. Translate : 'It deserves to be observed by great persons for the complete expiation of their sins, Oh Parikṣit!'

another *karma* which in its turn leads to (the creation of) another sin (like the proverbial bath of an elephant which covers itself with dust after coming out of water.

34. Oh King ! The servants of Yama were not wonder-struck in the mind as they remembered (their realization by personal experience) the greatness of Lord Viṣṇu as described to them by their master (Yama). Being afraid of persons who have resorted to Viṣṇu (Acyuta) they do not dare even to look at them since that day onwards.

35. The venerable Agastya (the sage born from a pitcher) who was seated (on the peak of) Malaya mountain, worshipping god Viṣṇu, narrated to me this secret historical legend.

CHAPTER FOUR

(*History of Dakṣa, the son of Pracetas*)

The King (Parīkṣit) said:

1. You have briefly described the genesis of gods, Asuras (demons), men, serpents, beasts and birds during the (first) Manvantara period presided over by Svāyambhuva Manu.

2. I desire to know from you the details of that creation (as to) how and with what power the transcendental, glorious Lord brought for the subsequent creation, Oh venerable sage.

Sūta said:

3. On hearing this excellent query from the royal sage (Parīkṣit), the great Yogī Śuka, the son of Bādarāyaṇa, expressed his appreciation and spoke unto him, the noblest of sages.

Śrī Śuka said:

4. When the ten Pracetasas, sons of king Prācīna-barhis emerged from within the sea (-like lake) they saw that the earth was covered with trees.

5. Being enraged at the trees and with their wrath flared up by austere penance, they blew out fire and wind through their mouth, with the intention of burning down the trees.[277]

6. Finding the trees being reduced to ashes by them both (the fire and the wind), the great Moon-god, the ruler of the vegetable kingdom, addressed them with a view to appeasing their anger.

7. "Oh highly fortunate Princes! It does not behove you to bear enmity to the poor trees. You are regarded as the protectors of the beings the special promotion of whose growth should be your concern and desire.

8. Oh Princes! The immutable glorious Lord Hari, the ruler of progenitors of all creatures has created the trees and the annual plants (cereals) for fruits and food-grains (or the food of the manes and food for gods).

9. The immobile ones (trees, plants etc. i.e. their produce like fruits and flowers) are food for the mobile creatures; the footless (i.e. grass etc.) the food of those having feet; the handless ones (e.g. the fish) are the food of those endowed with hands; and the quadrupeds (e.g. deer, boar etc.) are the food of the bipeds (human beings).

10. Oh sinless ones! Inasmuch as you are commanded by your father (Prācīnabarhis) and by the god of gods to procreate beings how is it proper for you to burn down trees (which form the food of creatures).

11. Please follow the path of the righteous which was adopted by your father, grandfather and great-grandfather and control your intensified wrath.

12. The parents are real friends (guardians of interests) of children; the eyelashes are of the eyes; the husband is of a woman; the king is of the subjects; the householder is the true friend of the mendicants and the teacher or the wise person is that of the ignorant. (The protectors of beings are hence the true friends of the creatures; you should not therefore, destroy the food or the means of livelihood of your subjects).

13. The Soul that dwells within the bodies of the creatures is Lord Hari, the Supreme Controller; please note

277. Vide Supra 4.30.44ff.

(carefully) that the entire creation is his abode. Hence, it is thus that he will be propitiated by you.

14. He, who, with a desire to know the real nature of the Soul, controls (within himself) sudden explosion of wrath within the cavity of his heart, goes beyond the *guṇas* which are the cause of the miseries of Saṁsāra).

15. Enough of the helpless trees that are (so far) consumed with fire. (Spare the remaining ones). May the surviving trees and yourselves live in bliss. Here is this excellent girl (Māriṣā by name) brought up by the trees. May she be accepted by you as your wife."

16. Having pacified them (the Pracetasas) thus and having offered that beautiful daughter (with fine hips) of the Apsaras (Pramlocā) to them in marriage, the king Soma (the Moon-god) returned. They then married her according to religious rites.[278]

17. Dakṣa, the son of Pracetasas, they say, was born of her from them. The three worlds are fully populated by his progeny (and their descendants).

18. Now listen to me attentively how Dakṣa who was so affectionate to his daughters procreated beings by his mind (mental faculty) as well as with his semen (physical body).

19. In the beginning, it was by his mental faculties that he procreated these beings, viz., gods, demons (*Asuras*), men and such other creatures dwelling in the sky, on the earth and in the water.

20. Finding that this creation of beings was not growing prolific, the progenitor (of creation) approached the hills near the foot of the Vindhya mountain and performed very austere penance.

21. There was an extremely holy lake efficacious to destroy sins. It was called Aghamarṣaṇa (efficacious to wash off sins). He bathed three times a day (in the morning, midday and evening) in the lake and propitiated Lord Hari with his austere penance.

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278. Vide supra 4.30. 13-16. As Soma brought her up by nectar from his index finger, he had the fatherly right to offer her in marriage. As Lord Viṣṇu commanded them all to marry her, religious sanction was automatically received for this polyandric marriage.

22. He praised the glorious Lord Viṣṇu with the *Haṁsa-guhya* hymn. I shall now recite that hymn with which Hari was pleased with Dakṣa.

Prajāpati (Dakṣa) said:

23. I pay obeisance to the transcendental Lord whose power of consciousness is not unreal; who is the controller of *jīva* (the individual Soul as reflected through the three *guṇas* of Māyā) and the Māyā (the cause or the basis of such reflection); whose form or true nature is invisible to those who look upon *guṇas* or objects of senses as real; who is beyond all the means of knowledge (e.g. inference etc.) who is beyond limit of time and space, and Self-effulgent.

24. I bow to the Supreme Lord who is the friend of the *jīva* inhabiting the same city (body) along with him but of whose friendliness (in activating the sense-organs and the mind) the *jīva* is not aware. He is the seer of the world (and hence unseen by the world) just as a *guṇa* (the object of cognition) cannot perceive the possessor of the *guṇa* (viz. the cognitive ability of the cognizing sense).

25. The body, the vital breaths, the senses, the internal organs or mental faculties, the five *bhūtas* (gross elements) and their *tanmātrās* (subtle forms e. g. sound, touch etc.) do not know either themselves or the others and their presiding deities who are beyond them all (as all these have no consciousness). The *jīva* (being consciousness by nature) knows all the *guṇas* (the root cause of the above-mentioned list). But the *jīva* who knows them (the above) does not know the Omniscient Lord who is Infinite. Him I praise.

26. When the mind which cognizes the world of names and forms ceases to function due to the loss or obsolescence of all cognition and memory, in the state of *samādhi* or complete absorption in the self, he (the Supreme Brahman) reveals himself through his inherent existence, consciousness and bliss. I offer my salutations to him whose abode is the pure heart.

27. With their purified intellect, the self-controlled, discerning persons discover (and meditate upon) him (as distinct from *ahaṁkāra*) as enthroned in the innermost heart,

even though he lies unmanifest by his nine powers[279] (viz. Prakṛti, *mahat* or cosmic intelligence, *ahaṁkāra* or ego, mind and *tanmātras* (five subtle *bhūtas*) and (by mind, five gross elements and ten sense-organs) and influenced by three *guṇas* (viz. *Sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*). (The above-mentioned wise persons do so) just as the experts in sacrificial lore separate (by friction) the sacrificial fire latent in the (piece of) wood by reciting the fifteen Sāmidhenī verses[280] (in the course of churning out fire).

28. He is realized as the highest bliss in meditation by the negation of Māyā which creates all distinctions and differences. Verily he bears every name, and assumes all forms. He possesses within him innumerable potencies which are beyond the power of words to describe. (May the Lord be gracious unto me).

29. Whatever is described in words, concluded (to be true) by the intellect, perceived by the senses or imagined by the mind, is only a phenomenon of the (three) *guṇas* and cannot be his essential nature; for he is verily characterised by the creation or dissolution of *guṇas* (i.e. their product, the universe).

30. It is Brahman on which everything depends; from it everything is caused; it has created everything from itself with itself. Everything is for it and belongs to it. Whatever it makes and causes others to make is Brahman. It is the ultimate cause of all causes both earlier (e.g. god Brahmā) or later. As the primary cause. it is known to have preceded all causes. It is one without a second, whether of its own kind or of another category. It is Brahman to whom I bow[281].

31. (If Brahman is the cause of the universe, why do

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279. VJ. mentions a different list of nine potencies, viz., *Vimalā*, *Utkarṣaṇī*, *Jñānakriyā* etc. and the three powers (*trivṛdbhiḥ*) are Will, Knowledge and Action (Kriyā).

280. Viṣṇu is called the fifteenth Principle (*Pāñcadaśya*). The remaining fourteen are : Ten sense-organs (*indriyas*), mind, intelligence (*buddhi*), vital airs (*Prāṇa*) and *Pradhāna*. Viṣṇu controls these—VJ.

281. VR. takes the Viśiṣṭādvaita position in which Īśvara is the Soul and *jīva* and *jagat* (unintelligent matter) form his body. The different cases in this verse show the intimate relation of Īśvara with others.

the different schools of thoughts like the followers of Mīmāṁsā, Nyāya, indulge in disputation?). It is his potencies (such as Māyā) which have verily become the grounds (causes) for disputations and concurrence for various eloquent theoreticians (of different schools of thought) and which (in spite of the exhortations of the knowers of the truth to these disputants) delude their minds now and again. I bow to him, the omnipresent Lord of infinite excellences.

32. (Yoga, as a science of divine worship, conceives of God as a cosmic person with Pātāla, subterranean regions, as his feet, while Sāṅkhya which is the Science of Knowledge or self-realization regards him as formless without any hands or feet.) The Yoga and Sāṅkhya systems of philosophy which proclaim faith in one and the same Reality predicate the existence and nonexistence of (two) distinct and mutually contradictory attributes to be subsisting in the same Reality (viz. possession and non-possession of feet etc.). But the common basis on which they agree and (is thus beyond dispute) is the existence of God—a Reality beyond dispute. It is the great thing—Brahman (to whom I bow).

33. May that glorious Supreme Lord of infinite attributes be gracious unto me—the Lord who though above material names and forms, invested himself with (absolutely pure *sāttvic*) forms by incarnating himself, and assumed names by his (wonderful) deeds, for the sake of bestowing his grace on those who seek shelter at his feet.

34. May that Supreme Ruler grant me my desired object (s)—the Supreme Lord who abiding in all bodies as the (formless) Inner controller, manifests himself in the forms of different deities to people according to the tendencies (formed by impressions of the actions of their previous births) and their paths of worship of recent origin, just as a breeze of wind (though itself devoid of the characteristics of the earth, viz. fragrance or colour) bears different kinds of smells according to the fragrance of the flowers with which it comes into contact or looks whitish, the attribute of dust mixed with it.

Śrī Śuka said :

35. Thus praised (with the hymns), the glorious Lord who is affectionate to his devotees manifested himself to Dakṣa

while he was extolling him in the sacred lake called Aghamarṣaṇa, oh foremost Kuru.

36. Riding with his feet flung on both the shoulders of Garuḍa, he wielded in his extraordinarily long and mighty arms a discus, a conch, a sword, a shield, an arrow, a noose and a mace (in each respectively).

37. He was clad in yellow silken garment with complexion dark like a cloud, his countenance and eyes were beaming with pleasure and joy. His person was adorned with *Vanamālā* (a garland of forest-flowers) and bore the mark called Śrīvatsa and the valuable gem Kaustubha.

38. He wore a very costly crown and bracelets and radiant pair of crocodile-shaped ear-rings. He was adorned with zones, rings, bracelets, anklets and armlets.

39. The Lord of the three worlds manifested a beautiful form captivating the three worlds. He was surrounded by Nārada, Nanda and other attendants and by protectors of the worlds (like Indra, Varuṇa). He was eulogized by Siddhas, Gandharvas and cāraṇas (the celestial singers and others) who followed him singing.

40. On seeing that most wonderful form (of the Lord), the progenitor Dakṣa was overcome with awe, but his heart was overjoyed. He lay prostrate before him on the ground (like a rod) and bowed to him.

41. Just as rivers are overflooded by streams, his senses were too full with intense joy to be able to speak. Thus, on account of excessive joy he could not utter a word.

42 Lord Viṣṇu who knows the minds of all created beings spoke thus to the progenitor devotee Dakṣa who had laid himself prostrate that way before him and was desirous of procreating progeny.

The Venerable Lord said :

43. Oh highly fortunate son of Pracetas! You have achieved the objective of your austere penance inasmuch as you have cherished supreme devotion unto me through your unswerving intense faith in me.

44. Oh Lord of created beings! I am pleased with you as the growth of the universe is the aim of your penance. It is

also my desire that there should be all round growth and prosperity of all created beings.

45. God Brahmā, Śiva, you all Prajāpatis (Lords of created beings), Manus (progenitors of human beings who preside over certain epochs or *Manvantaras*) and the foremost deities—all are my special incarnations for the prosperity and procreation of created beings.

46*. Oh Brahman (Dakṣa) ! Contemplation (accompanied with disciplines of *Yama* and *niyama*) is my heart. The spiritual lore (the internal repetition of *Mantras* with the specific technique of *nyāsa* etc. which results in concrete meditation and my realization) is my body. The activities pertaining to contemplation is my form. Accurately performed sacrifices are the limbs of my body. The merit (accruing from the well-performed sacrifices) is my Soul. Gods (the recipients of oblations in the sacrifices) form my very life.

47. At the beginning of creation, I alone existed (without any activity). There was nothing else as internal (the seer or knower) or external (the seen or the object of knowledge). I was pure consciousness and unmanifested. There was (as if) deep sleep (no activity) everywhere.

48. In me who am Infinite and endowed with an infinite number of attributes, there evolved through Māyā (constituted of three *guṇas*) this universe (a product of *guṇas*). At that time the selfborn Brahmā, the First Person (the creator of all) arose (along with the universe).

49. When the great god Brahmā, though supplied with my energy, became engaged in the work of creation, he felt that he was not sufficiently competent for it.

50. Then as per my command, the god Brahmā performed very austere penance. Empowered by it, he created nine progenitors of created beings including you (in your previous birth) in the beginning.

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*. VR., SD. explain that Lord wants to emphasize the importance of contemplation, sacrifices etc. as they are dear to him.

GD. explains that the Lord reminds Dakṣa of his previous birth and proficiency in sacrifice by calling him 'Brahman'.

51. Oh dear child! Here is the daughter of the progenitor of creatures, Pañcajana. Her name is Asiknī. Accept her as your wife, Oh Lord of created beings.

52. You have to follow the righteous course of sexual union between a duly married couple. You will procreate progeny in large numbers from her who will also observe the same righteous duty (of sexual intercourse between the duly married) like you.

53. All created beings after you will be born through sexual intercourse with women, under the influence of my Māyā and they will offer worship.

Śrī Śuka said:

54. Having addressed him [thus, Lord Hari the prime cause of the universe vanished on that very spot like an object seen in a dream, while Dakṣa was looking on.

CHAPTER FIVE

(Dakṣa curses Nārada)

Śrī Śuka said:

1. Being imbued with the energy of Viṣṇu, Dakṣa became powerful and begot through that (above-mentioned) Pāñcajanī ten thousand sons called Haryaśva.

2. Oh King! All those sons of Dakṣa were of the same nature and similarly righteous in conduct. When they were commanded by the father (Dakṣa) to beget children, they went to the western direction.

3. They went to a sacred lake called Nārāyaṇa-saras[282] situated in the area where the river Sindhu meets the sea—a holy place resorted to by a number of sages and Siddhas.

4. At the very touch of that (sacred water of the) lake, their hearts were cleansed of all impurities and they found their

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282. A lake at the mouth of the Indus at the western extremity of the Runn of Kacch, 18 miles south-west of Lakhpat—CDAMI 138.

mind attracted to the righteous way of life of the Paramahaṁsas (the highest order of ascetics).

5. Being restrained by the command of their father for begetting prolific progeny, they practised severe austerities. It is then, they say, that the celestial sage Nārada saw them.

6. And he (Nārada) spoke unto them:

'Oh Haryaśvas! How is it that without seeing the limits of the earth you want to create children. You are certainly childish (foolish). It is a pity that protectors (of the subjects) as you are, you are really childish.

7-9. Without seeing a kingdom inhabited by only one man, and without knowing the hole with (apparently) invisible outlet, the woman who can assume different forms (at will), and the man who espouses a harlot, a river flowing in both directions, a wonderful house constructed of twentyfive materials, at one place a swan telling miraculous tales, an independent, revolving (strong, sharp) disc made of adamants and razors, and without properly understanding the implication of the command of your omniscient father, how will you proceed with your job of creation?

Śrī Śuka said:

10. Having heard the enigmatic words of the divine sage (Nārada), the Haryaśvas, with their ow ninborn reasoning capacity, began to investigate with their intelligence.

11. The earth (*bhū*) is that field (or the *liṅga-śarīra*—the subtle body—which causes pleasure, pain, merit, demerit etc. like an agricultural farm yielding crop of cereals) designated as *jīva*. The subtle body is (practically) beginningless (existing from times immemorial) and it acts as a bondage to the Soul. Without seeing how it becomes extinct, what is the use of impious *karmas* (which do not lead to Mokṣa).

12. The only one (man in the country) stands for the Sole Almighty ruler (of the universe). He is (beyond and) witness to all mental states, viz., *viśva*, *taijasa* and *prājña*) and hence is called the fourth—the omnipresent. He is self-dependent supreme (the cause of everything else). Without seeing that birthless (eternally free) Lord, what purpose can be served by acts not dedicated to him?

13. Just as a person who has gone to the subterranean heaven (*pātāla*) does not return (to the earth in the same body), a man does not return to *saṁsāra* after attaining to the self-illuminating Brahman within him. To a man who has not realized (lit. is ignorant of) the Inner Light—Self-effulgent Brahman, worthless *karmas* (which may lead to heavenly happiness and other transitory pleasures) are of no avail.

14. Like a loose wanton woman wearing various attractive forms and gifted with (many attractive) qualities, the intellect of man assumes shapes of objects of lower type of pleasures (like form, taste and other objects of senses) and is influenced by *guṇas* (like *rajas*, *tamas*). To a person who has not put an end to (i.e. transcended) such a multiple-interested intellect, what can be achieved through hot pursuit of such activities?

15. What can be achieved through acts done without discernment and knowledge by a *jīva* (man) who does not understand the loss of his independence (and non-attachment) by his association with such (above-mentioned) intellect and is like a husband of a loose wife, follows her ways (characterised by pleasure and pain).

16. What can be gained from activities influenced by Māyā which causes both the creation and destruction (and is like a river flowing both ways). (In order to prevent people fallen in it from reaching the banks) it rushes forth with great velocity (assuming the form of anger, egotism etc.) at the ghats, and its banks (in the form of penance, learning etc.).

17. Puruṣa (the Inner Controller abiding in the body) is a wonderful basis and mirror[283] reflecting the twentyfive categories (enumerated by Sāṁkhyas). Of what use are the acts (done with a false sense of independence) by one who has not realized that he (Puruṣa) presides over the body (the aggregate of the categories—a collection of cause and effect).[284]

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283. ŚR. reads *adbhuta-darśana* 'One who is of wonderful form' (*āscarya-rūpa*).

284. Sāṁkhyas differ : According to Īśvarakṛṣṇa, Prakṛti is uncreated (without any cause). The next seven categories from *mahat* to *tanmātras* are both cause (of the next category) and the effect (of the previous category) and the next sixteen : mind, 5 gross elements, 10 sense-organs are effects only. Puruṣa is neither the cause nor effect.—Sāṁkhyakārikā 3.

18. (This explains *kvacid haṁsaṁ citrakatham* in verse 8 above). What purpose will be served by acts oriented to the external phenomenal world if one neglects (the study of) the *śāstra* (philosophic teaching) which establishes the existence of the Almighty Ruler by distinguishing between the intelligent principle (the Soul) and inert matter and shows the (nature of) bondage and (Final) Liberation (like a swan drinking milk only from the mixture of milk and water) ?

19. (The explanation of *kṣaurapavyaṁ svayam bhramim*—verse 8 above).

The wheel of Time which is relentlessly and eternally revolving is sharp like razor-blade. It is absolutely independent (and hence uncontrollable). It destroys the whole creation. To him who does not know this (nature of Time), of what use are the worthless acts (done under the false presumption that their fruits are eternal).

20. (The inner significance of verse 9 above).

How can anyone who does not understand the precept of desisting from worldly activities, given by his father, the *śāstra* (which gives him the second birth by the *upanayana*, investiture of the sacred-thread-ceremony and tenders salutary advice) and who entertains faith in the path of worldly activities (*Pravṛtti-mārga*) based on *guṇas*, go ahead with the work of creation? (As Dakṣa ceases to be a father after *upanayana*, you can disregard his order without incurring a sin if you follow the precept of *śāstra*, your father, and follow the path of renunciation—*Nivṛtti-dharma*).

21. (Being convinced by Nārada) Haryaśvas unanimously resolved thus, and circumambulating him (Nārada, by the right side as a mark of respect) went the way (to liberation) from which there is no return, Oh King!

22. The sage Nārada, who has concentrated (lit. entered) his undivided mind in the lotus-like feet of Lord Viṣṇu (Hṛṣīkeśa—the Master of sense-organs) as revealed in *Svara-Brahman* (*Brahman* in the form of notes of the musical scale on his lute), went about (his own way in) the world.

23. Having heard that his sons, so excellent due to their righteous character, have disappeared and are lost to their original duty (of procreating children) due to the advice of

Nārada, Dakṣa was tormented with sorrow and lamented that even to have good children can be a source of grief.

24. Being much consoled by god Brahmā, Dakṣa again procreated by Pañcajanī a thousand sons called Śabalāśva.

25. Even they (Śabalāśvas) who were commanded by the father to beget progeny, took to religious vows and went to the (sacred) lake Nārāyaṇa where their elder brothers attained perfection (i.e. god-realization).

26. With their minds and hearts perfectly cleansed of all impurities (sins) at the touch of those sacred waters, they practised austere penance muttering (all the while) the sacred syllable OM (a symbol of the Supreme Brahman).

27. For several months, they subsisted on water, and for many months, on the air only. They propitiated the Lord of all *Mantras* (the glorious god Viṣṇu), repeating this (following) sacred *mantra* :

28. "OM. Salutations to Lord Nārāyaṇa, the Indwelling Controller, the Supreme Soul, whose place of manifestation is the extremely pure *sāttvic* heart and who is absolutely free from all blemishes. We meditate upon him."

29. The sage Nārada approached even those (sons of Dakṣa) who made up their minds to renew creation and spoke to them the enigmatic words similar to those addressed to their (elder) brothers, Oh King of Kings.

30. "Oh sons of Dakṣa! Listen carefully to the precept as given (lit. addressed) by me. You find out the path followed by your elder brothers (for whom you are so full of affection).

31. A brother who knows the path of righteousness, follows the great path trodden by his brothers and with merit as his friend, he enjoys (celestial) life in the company of the Marut—(wind) gods (noted for their fraternal affection)."

32. Oh noble King! having addressed this much, Nārada whose audience is never unfruitful, departed. They (Śabalāśvas) also followed the (spiritual) path of their (elder) brothers.

33. Having resorted to the exalted and agreeable path attainable to those whose senses and minds are turned within (away from the external world)—the path that leads to

the realization of the Supreme Brahman—they, like the nights that have passed, never return to this day.

34. Noticing at this time, a number of evil portents, the Prajāpati Dakṣa came to know that Nārada had ruined his sons.

35. Overwhelmed with grief for his sons, he got enraged with Nārada. (To prevent Dakṣa from turning into a recluse, Nārada approached him). Finding Nārada, he exploded (lit. spoke to him) with his lower lip quivering with rage.

Dakṣa said:

36. Oh wicked fellow donning the garb of holy man! You have done a great harm to good people like us, in showing the path of mendicants to my young (good-natured) children.

37. Oh sinful person! You have deprived (my sons) of the bliss in both the worlds (here and hereafter), as they have not repaid their debts to the sages, gods and manes and have not investigated the nature of *karmas*.

38. Merciless and prejudicer of the mind of children as you are, you are bringing stigma to the glory of Lord Hari, and shameless as you are, you still move among the attendants of Hari.

39. With the exception of you who are verily a traitor to friends and who sow enmity between friends, all the devotees of Hari are really ever eager to shower grace on living beings.

40. Renunciation cannot in this way be generated in the minds of men by you who have disguised yourself as an Avadhūta even though you have no knowledge. Though you regard that self-control (automatically) severs the bonds of affection (it is wrong).

41. A man cannot realize how objects of sensual pleasures cause painful consequences, without personally experiencing them. Therefore, one does not get disgusted to that extent if his mind is unsettled by others (in that matter), as a person would who has undergone the experience himself.

42. We have tolerated the unbearable wrong you have done to us, householders, who have vowed to perform Vedic *karmas* with a wish to get heavenly bliss.

43. You are a destroyer of the continuity of my race. As you have again done a wrong to us, you will not get a resting place while wandering through the worlds (Oh fool).

Śrī Śuka said:

44. Nārada who was highly respected by the pious people accepted the curse saying, 'Very well'. He is called really a *Sādhu* (pious soul) who though competent to retaliate, bears up the wrong done to him.

CHAPTER SIX

(Progeny of Dakṣa's Daughters)

Śrī Śuka said :

1. Then comforted by the self-born god Brahmā, Prācetasa Dakṣa begot on Asiknī sixty daughters who were affectionate to their father.

2. He gave ten daughters (in marriage) to Dharma, the presiding deity of righteousness, thirteen to sage Ka (Kaśyapa), twenty-seven to the Moon-god, two each to sages Bhūta, Aṅgiras and Kṛśāśva and the rest to Tārkṣya, another name of Kaśyapa.

3. Now, hear from me their names along with those of their offspring whose children and children's children (descendants) have populated completely the three worlds.

4. (The names of Dharma's wives are) : Bhānu, Lambā, Kakubh, Jāmi, Viśvā, Sādhyā, Marutvatī, Vasu, Muhūrtā, Saṅkalpā. Now listen to (the names of the sons).

5. From Bhānu was born Devarṣabha. His son was Indrasena. From Lambā was born Vidyota who gave birth to (deities presiding over) cloud.

6. Saṅkaṭa was born from Kakubh. His son was Kīkaṭa, from whom were begotten the spirits presiding over

the fortresses on the earth. Svarga was the son of Jāmi. From him was born Nandi.

7. From Viśva were begotten the Viśvedevas who are said to be childless. Sādhyā gave birth to a group of gods known as Sādhya whose son was Arthasiddhi.

8. From Marutvatī were born (the forty-nine) Maruts (wind-gods) and Jayanta who was a part manifestation of Vāsudeva and whom they know as Upendra.

9. From Muhūrtā were born the race of gods called Mauhūrtikas who verily bestow upon living beings fruit appropriate to the particular period of time (when an act is performed at that time).

10. Saṅkalpā gave birth to Saṅkalpa (the deity presiding over thought process). It is declared that the god of love is born of Saṅkalpa. Vasu gave birth to eight sons called Vasus. Hear from me their names (now).

11. (Their names are): Droṇa, Prāṇa, Dhruva, Arka, Agni, Doṣa, Vasu, Vibhāvasu. Droṇa begot from his wife Abhimati children called Harṣa, Śoka, Bhaya and others (the presiding deities of joy, sorrow, fear etc.).

12. Prāṇa begot Sahas, Āyus, Purojava from his wife Ūrjasvatī. Dharaṇī (the earth), the wife of Dhruva, gave births to various towns and cities.

13. Vāsanā was the wife of Arka (the Sun-god). Their sons like Tarṣa and others were well known. Dhārā was the wife of the Vasu called Agni, and their sons were Draviṇaka and others.

14. And Skanda was the son of Kṛttikā (another wife of Agni). From him were born Viśākha and others. Doṣa had by Śarvarī, a son called Śiśumāra (the deity of the stellar sphere) who was an *aṁśa* (digit) of Hari.

15. From Āṅgirasī, the wife of Vasu, was born Viśvakarmā, the architect of gods. The name of his wife was Ākṛti. From her were born Cākṣusa, (the sixth) Manu. Viśvedevas and Sādhya gods were the sons of Manu.

16. From Vibhāvasu, Uṣā gave birth to Vyuṣṭa, Rociṣa and Ātapa. From Ātapa was born Pañcayāma (the deity presiding over the day-time) who keeps created beings awake and alert to their duties.

17-18. Sarūpā, the wife of Bhūta, gave birth to crores of Rudras (the deities entrusted with the duty of destruction), the chief among them were the eleven, namely, Raivata, Aja, Bhava, Bhīma, Vāma, Ugra, Vṛṣākapi, Ajaikapāda, Ahirbudhnya, Bahurūpa and Mahān. From Bhūtā, another wife of Bhūta, were born the terrible Bhūtas and evil-spirits (called Vināyakas) who were the attendants of Rudras.

19. Svadhā, the wife of Prajāpati Aṅgiras, gave birth to the manes (*Pitṛs*). Satī, another wife of Aṅgiras, accepted the Veda called Atharva—Aṅgiras—as her son.

20. Kṛśāśva begot from his wife Arcis, Dhūmrakeśa as the son, and on Dhiṣaṇā four sons, viz. Vedaśiras, Devala, Vayuna and Manu.

21-22. Tārkṣya which was another name of the sage Kaśyapa, had four wives, namely, Vinatā, Kadrū, Pataṅgī and Yāminī. Pataṅgī gave birth to birds; Yāminī to locusts. Vinatā had a son called Garuḍa who was the vehicle of directly the Lord of Sacrifices (Viṣṇu). She had another son called Aruṇa (the thighless) who is the charioteer of the Sun-god. Kadrū, mothered serpents of various species.

23. Oh descendant of Bharata ! The presiding deities of Kṛttikā and other twenty-seven constellations of stars, were wedded to the Moon, but due to the curse of Dakṣa, he was affected by consumption and had no issue from them.

24. Having propitiated Dakṣa again, he regained his digits which decreased in the dark half of the month but had no children. Now, listen to the auspicious names of the mothers of the world (viz. Kaśyapa's wives).

25-26. The following are the names of the wives of Kaśyapa who gave birth to this world; Aditi, Diti, Danu, Kāṣṭhā, Ariṣṭā, Surasā, Ilā, Muni, Krodhavaśā, Tāmrā, Surabhi, Saramā and Timi. From Timi were born aquatic beings; from Saramā, tiger and other carnivorous animals.

27. From Surabhi, were created buffalo, cow and other beasts with cloven hooves; from Tāmrā, hawks, vultures and other birds of prey; from Muni, the bevy of celestial demsels.

28. Oh King ! Serpents like Dandaśūka and others were the offspring of Krodhavaśā; the vegetable kingdom, of Ilā, and the Yakṣas and Rakṣasas of Surasā.

29. The Gandharvas (celestial singers) were born of Ariṣṭā; beasts with uncloven feet (e.g. horses, donkeys etc.), of Kāṣṭhā; Danu had sixty-one sons. Listen to the names of the prominent ones in them :

30-31. (They are :) Dvimūrdhan, Śambara, Ariṣṭa, Hayagrīva, Vibhāvasu, Ayomukha, Śaṅkuśiras, Svarbhānu, Kapila, Aruṇa, Puloman, Vṛṣaparvan, Ekacakra, Anutāpana, Dhūmrakeśa, Virūpākṣa, Vipracitti and Durjaya.

32. As is reported, Namuci married Suprabhā, the daughter of Svarbhānu. The mighty Yayāti, the son of Nahuṣa, was wedded to Śarmiṣṭhā, the daughter of Vṛṣaparvan.

33. Danu's son Vaiśvānara had four daughters who were very beautiful to look at. They are : Upadānavī, Hayaśirā, Pulomā and Kālakā.

34. Out of them, Upadānavī was married to Hiraṇyākṣa and Hayaśirā to Kratu. Oh King, Kaśyapa married Pulomā and Kālakā, the two daughters of Vaiśvānara.

35. The great sage Kaśyapa married them as he was directed to do so by god Brahmā. The sons of Pulomā were the Dānavas known as Kālakeyas who were famous for their warlike nature.

36. Out of them, sixty-thousand sons known as Nivātakavacas who used to disturb sacrifices, were killed by your father's father single-handedly, while he paid a visit to Svarga and wanted to please Indra.

37. Vipracitti begot on his wife Siṁhikā one hundred and one sons. The eldest of them was Rāhu who got a position in the planetary system, along with the remaining hundred sons who were named Ketu.

38. Now, listen from me in due sequence, the details of the race of Aditi wherein the Almighty God Nārāyaṇa incarnated by his own *aṁśa* (digit).

39. The sons of Aditi were : Vivasvān, Aryaman, Pūṣan, Tvaṣṭṛ, Savitṛ, Bhaga, Dhātṛ, Vidhātṛ, Varuṇa, Mitra, Indra and Trivikrama (Vāmana). (These are the presiding deities of the orb of the Sun each month).

40. The highly fortunate Saṁjñā, the wife of Vivasvat, gave birth to Śrāddhadeva, the Manu and a twin called the

Yama god and (his sister) Yamī. That very Saṁjñā became a female horse and gave birth to the twin gods Aśvinīkumāras, on this earth.

41. Chāyā (another wife of Vivasvat) gave birth to Śanaiścara, the presiding deity of the planet Saturn, and Sāvarṇi Manu. She gave birth to a daughter also called Tapatī who chose in marriage Saṁvaraṇa as her husband.

42. Mātṛkā was the wife of Aryaman. Their sons were called Carṣaṇi (for they possessed wisdom of what should and what should not be done). From them were evolved the human kind by god Brahmā.

43. Pūṣan was childless. He got his teeth broken formerly as he exhibited his teeth in laughing at Śiva when he was enraged at Dakṣa, and Pūṣan had to subsist on flour.

44. The girl Racanā, the younger sister of the Daityas, became the spouse of Tvaṣṭṛ. From them were born sons namely Saṁniveśa and the mighty Viśvarūpa.

45. The host of gods selected him (for preceptorship) even though he was the nephew (sister's son) of their enemies, as they were forsaken by their preceptor Bṛhaspati who was insulted by them.

CHAPTER SEVEN

(Bṛhaspati's Insult and his abandonment of Preceptorship)

The King said :

1. Please tell me, Oh venerable sir, why the gods were forsaken by their own preceptor and what was the fault of the disciples (gods) against their teacher.

Śrī Śuka said :

2-6. Indra transgressed the path followed by the good, due to his arrogance of overlordship of the three worlds. (Once) surrounded by Maruts, Vasu, Rudras, Ādityas, Ṛbhus, Viśvedevas, Sādhyas and the Aśvinikumāras, and

attended upon and praised and sweetly extolled by Siddhas, Cāraṇas, Gandharvas, by sages, the knowers of Brahman, Vidyādharas, heavenly damsels, Kinnaras, birds and Nāgas (serpents), he (Indra) was seated on the throne equipped with a white umbrella, beautiful like the orb of the full Moon, and with *chowries*, fans and other insignia of supreme royalty. He looked extremely splendid with (his wife) Śacī occupying half the throne.

7-9. When he did not welcome the great preceptor of gods and of himself, by offering him due formalities of respect such as standing up, offering a seat, on his arrival; he (Indra) did not rise at all from his seat, even though he saw the great sage Bṛhaspati who was adorable both to gods and demons, coming to his assembly; the wise and powerful descendent of Aṅgiras (Bṛhaspati) who understood that the violation of good manners is due to the arrogance of affluence and power, came out of the assembly and quietly returned to his house.

10. At that very moment, Indra became aware of the disrespect shown by him to his preceptor, and he, of his own accord, censured himself publicly in the assembly.

11. "Oh what a pity ! What an unrighteous and wicked deed has been committed by me, of poor intellect : being intoxicated with the arrogance of wealth and power, my preceptor has been disrespectfully treated in this assembly.

12. Who will covet for the prosperity and wealth of the Lord of the celestial regions, if he be wise ? for I who am the Lord of gods of *sāttvic* nature was dragged into the demonic state of egotism by that prosperity.

13. Those who lay down that the occupants of the highest position should not rise to receive anyone, do not know the highest code of conduct.

14. Those who believe in the words of those who show the wrong course and themselves sink in the dark infernal regions, verily, go down (to the abysmal depth of hell) by boarding a raft of granite rock, as it were.

15. Now with all my crookedness shed off and touching with my head the feet of that Brāhmaṇa, the preceptor of gods, and possessor of unfathomable intelligence, I shall propitiate him."

16. While Indra was musing thus, the venerable Bṛhaspati went out of his mansion and disappeared with his superb spiritual power.

17. The glorious Lord of the celestial region, looked on all sides for the whereabouts of his preceptor, but could not trace him. Anxiously considering (what will happen to them all, in the absence of the protection of the preceptor) Indra, though he commanded the loyalty of all gods, did not get the peace of mind.

18. As soon as all the demons got the report of it (the desertion of gods' side by Bṛhaspati), they followed the advice of Śukra. Haughty as they were, they carried a war against gods with their arms raised.

19. Gods whose heads, thighs and arms were deeply wounded by the sharp arrows discharged by the demons, went along with Indra, with their heads lowered in humility, to god Brahmā for protection.

20. The venerable birthless self-born god Brahmā saw them afflicted and harassed that way. Consoling them, the god spoke out to them in his supreme grace.

God Brahmā said :

21. What a pity it is, Oh great gods ! Out of arrogance of power and wealth you have certainly committed a very unjust and inauspicious deed in not respectfully welcoming a self-controlled Brāhmaṇa who was imbued with the spirit of Brahman.

22. It is the result of your unrighteousness that you gods, rich and powerful as you are, are defeated at the hands of your enemies who were extremely weak.

23. Oh Indra ! Look at your enemies who became extremely powerless due to disrespect shown by them to their preceptor, have again grown in strength due to their devoted propitiation of their preceptor Śukra. They, who regard Śukra as their deity, may capture even my abode (Brahmaloka).

24. The demons who are well instructed in their objectives by Śukra and whose secret designs are not divulged, have the slightest regard for the celestial region. (They can easily

conquer it). Inauspicious results do not befall kings who are protected by Brāhmaṇas, Lord Viṣṇu and cows.

25. Therefore, take resort to Viśvarūpa immediately. That Brāhmaṇa, the son of Tvaṣṭṛ, possesses self-control and (a wealth of) penance. If respectfully treated by you, he will accomplish your objects, if you put up with (some of) his acts (of partiality to demons).

Śrī Śuka said :

26. Oh King ! Gods who were thus advised by god Brahmā, were relieved of their feverish anxiety. They approached the sage Viśvarūpa, the son of Tvaṣṭṛ, embraced him and addressed him thus.

Gods said :

27. We have approached your hermitage as unexpected guests. May you be blessed, Oh child. Please accomplish the wish of your elders (uncles) as demanded by the occasion.

28. It is the highest duty of virtuous sons to serve their parents, even though the sons themselves have got children. It is much more so in the case of celibates, Oh Brahman.

29. The preceptor who invests the sacred thread and initiates in the Vedas, is the embodiment of the Vedas. Father is god Brahmā (the creator) incarnate. A brother is as if an image of Indra, the chief of gods. The mother is a veritable earth personified.

30. A sister is the embodiment of tenderness. An unexpected visitor is the soul of *dharma* (the god of righteousness). And the guest staying with us is the god of Fire incarnate and all beings are the representations of the Supreme Soul of Lord Viṣṇu. (Therefore, one should look upon all beings like himself).

31. Oh child, you should carry out our request and remove by your penance the afflictions of us, your elders, who are suffering from defeat at the hands of our enemies.

32. We select you, who are possessed of Brahmanic power, and a Brāhmaṇa deserving respect, as our preceptor, so that we shall easily and thoroughly vanquish our enemies by the virtue of your spiritual power.

33. They (the wise) do not censure the act of bowing at the feet of younger persons for the accomplishment of their objects. Mere age is not the ground of superiority when one is wanting in Vedic knowledge.

The Sage (Śuka) said :

34. The great sage Viśvarūpa who was so earnestly entreated by the gods for accepting priesthood, became pleased and spoke to them in soft words.

Viśvarūpa said :

35. Priesthood has been condemned by the righteous ones as leading to the loss of spiritual power. But, Oh masters, how a person like me who deserves to be commanded by Lords of worlds like you, can refuse your request, for compliance (of your orders) is in my real interest.

36. To those who decide not to possess anything, grain that is gleaned after the removal of corn from the fields and the grains of corn found after the market-day is over, form the wealth. I have performed my righteous duties with that wealth. Oh suzerine Lords, how should I accept the reproachful priesthood which pleases only those who are wretched in intellect.

37. I, however, do not refuse what has been requested by elders like you. Whatever insignificant is desired by you, I shall accomplish it, at the cost of my life and means.

Śrī Śuka said :

38. The great ascetic Viśvarūpa who was thus solicited for accepting priesthood promised them (the gods) thus, and carried out his duties of priesthood, with perfect concentration.

39. The (spiritually) powerful sage snatched the fortune of the enemies of gods even though it was protected by the incantations and spells of Śukra, and by the prayer (lore) of Viṣṇu, i.e. by *Nārāyaṇa Kavaca*, gave it to Indra.

40. The noble-minded Viśvarūpa initiated Mahendra in that lore, and Indra, the thousand-eyed god, became powerful and protected by that lore, vanquished the armies of demons.

41.* Indra, the leader of all gods, entered the spiritual coat of armour called *Nārāyaṇa Kavaca* and always scored victories over the demons, like a lion over ordinary beasts, Oh child.

CHAPTER EIGHT

(*The Nārāyaṇa-Kavaca explained*)

The King enquired:

1-2: Oh venerable Sir, please teach me the protective prayer of Nārāyaṇa which serves as an armour, and protected by which, Indra, the god with thousand eyes, sportfully but thoroughly vanquished the soldiers of the enemies with their horses and chariots, and enjoyed the sovereignty of the three worlds, and protected by which he conquered his enemies who attacked him with raised arms, in the battle.

Śrī Śuka replied:

3. The priest Viśvarūpa, the son of Tvaṣṭṛ, when solicited, explained to the great Indra, the protective prayer called Nārāyaṇa Kavaca. Listen to it with concentrated mind.

4-6. "When a danger is impending, a person should wash his hands and feet, and sip water as *ācamana*. He should put on a ring of the Kuśa grass round his finger, and sit with his face turned to the North. Thus purified and observing silence, he should perform *Nyāsa*, consecrating the various parts of the body and hands with the *mantras* or sacred formulae (one of eight syllables viz. *Oṁ namo Nārāyaṇāya* and the other of twelve syllables, viz. *Oṁ namo bhagavate Vāsudevāya*). He should put on the armour (protective covering) sacred to lord Nārāyaṇa, by contemplating the Lord (with the eight-syllabled *mantra—Oṁ namo Nārāyaṇāya*) located in the feet, in the knee-joints, the thighs, the stomach, the heart and the chest, the mouth, the crown of the head (thus spiritualizing the

*VJ's text adds this verse.

whole body with the protective *mantra* of Nārāyaṇa) or perform the same in the reverse order (technically known as *Saṁhāra Nyāsa*).

7. He should then perform the *karanyāsa*—the spiritualization of the hands—with the secret incantation or *mantra* consisting of twelve syllables (*Oṁ namo bhagavate Vāsudevāya*). He should deposit spiritual power beginning with the sacred syllable *Oṁ* and ending with *ya* in his fingers and joints of the thumbs.

(The method of spiritual insulation against dangers with the mantra *Oṁ Viṣṇave namaḥ* is explained).

8. He should deposit OM (the first syllable of the mantra *Oṁ Viṣṇave namaḥ*) in the heart, *vi* on the crown of the head, *ṣ* in the middle of the eyebrows, and *ṇa* in the tuft of the hair on the head.

9-10. The syllable *ve* should be used (to spiritualize) the two eyes and *na* be deposited in all joints (of the body). He should contemplate the syllable *ma* as the missile. He should direct in all (the ten) directions the syllable *maḥ* (ma with a *visarga*), and ending with the sound phaṭ (for casting the spiritual protection on all sides, to shut out evil spirits—the words to be used while snapping the middle finger and the thumb are maḥ astrāya phaṭ). Thus a wise man becomes the mantra *Oṁ Viṣṇave namaḥ* incarnate.

11. He should then meditate on the Supreme Lord endowed with six potencies (viz. sovereignty of the universe, righteousness, glory, affluence, supreme knowledge and detachment from the world) and should contemplate himself as identical with him. He should then repeat the following mantra viz., *Nārāyaṇa kavaco* as the embodiment of learning, energy and penance.

12. May Hari, designated by the sacred syllable OM, afford me protection on all sides and in every respect—Hari who has placed his lotus-like feet on the back of the king of birds, viz., Garuḍa; who possesses eight spiritual powers (*siddhis-aṇimā* etc.) and who is endowed with eight arms in which he wields eight weapons, viz. conch, discus, a shield, sword, mace, arrows, bow and a noose.

13. May Viṣṇu in the form of the Fish (Incarnation)

protect me from aquatic animals and the noose of Varuṇa in waters. May Vāmana who has assumed the form of a young boy by his magic power protect me on land. May Trivikrama who has assumed the cosmic form protect me in the skies.

14. May the mighty Lord Nṛsiṁha (the Man-Lion form of Viṣṇu), the vanquisher of the king of demon-forces (Hiraṇyakaśipu), at the release of whose tremendous peals of roaring laughter, the cardinal points reverberated violently, and the embryos (from the wombs of Asura women) were discharged, protect me, in dangerous situations like jungles, battle-fronts and others.

15. May the boar-incarnation of Lord Hari, who uplifted the sphere of the earth with his tusk, and who is the embodiment of Sacrifice (yajña) protect me on the road (while travelling). May Paraśurāma shield me (from dangers) on mountain-peaks and may Rāma, the elder brother of Bharata, along with Lakṣmaṇa, protect me in long journeys (or foreign lands).

16. May Lord Nārāyaṇa shield me from black magic and commissions of mistakes of all kinds. May the sage Nara protect (me) from pride; Datta, the Lord of *yoga*, guard me against pitfalls in the practice of yoga. May Kapila, the controller of (*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*) *guṇas* protect me from the bondage of *karma*.

17. May Sanatkumāra save me from the god of Love; May the horseheaded God (Viṣṇu), from (neglecting in payment of obeisance to (images of) gods situated on the way. May the prominent divine sage Nārada, from the (thirty-two)[285]

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285. VD. quotes from Pañcarātra, the list of 32 transgressions in the worship of god Viṣṇu. They may be translated as follows :—

(1) To enter a temple in a vehicle or without removing even wooden sandals; (2) to neglect serving in celebrations (the *utsavas*) of gods; (3) to fail to bow to an image of god after seeing it; (4) to bow to god in an impure condition (as in the mourning period); (5) to salute with one hand (instead of folding both the hands); (6) merely to circumambulate the image of the deity without stopping to bow to it, after completing each circle; (7) to sit with legs stretched before god's image; (8) to squat raising one knee and encircling them with hands before the deity: (9) to take meals in front of the deity; (10) to sleep before deity; (11) to tell a lie in the deity's presence; (12) to talk loudly; (13) to speak between each other: (14) to cry loudly and (15) to quarrel before the god's

transgressions in worshipping the Supreme person. May Hari in the Tortoise-form save me from all kinds of hells.

18. May Lord Dhanvantari (the physician incarnation) protect me from unwholesome food; may Lord Ṛṣabha, the subduer of his mind, from the pairs of opposites (pleasure-pain, heat-cold) and from fear; may Yajña, from the censure of the world; Balabhadra, from the death and violence at the hands of others (or from Yama); Lord Śeṣa, the king of serpents, from the revengeful race of serpents (called Krodhavaśa).

19. May venerable Vyāsa (Dvaipāyana) guard me against ignorance, Lord Buddha save me from heretical doctrines and negligence of duties; may Kalki who has specially taken this noble incarnation for the protection of Dharma (righteousness), protect me from the Kali age, the dirtiest of all aeons.

20. May Lord Keśava protect me with his mace in the morning (the 1st sixth part of the day); may Kṛṣṇa who has taken a flute in his hands, protect me in the *Saṅgava* period (next sixth part of the day); may Nārāyaṇa with his javeline held up (protect me) in the forenoon; may Viṣṇu with the discus Sudarśana in his hand, shield me at mid-day.

21. May god Madhusūdana, the wielder of the terrible bow, protect me in the afternoon; may god Mādhava of three forms (Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra), in the evening. May Hṛṣīkeśa protect me in the first sixth part of the night; and Padmanābha alone during the second part and even at midnight.

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image; (16) to trouble or (17) to favour another; (18) to speak cruel words in the presence of the Deity; (19) to cover one's self with a blanket; (20) to speak ill of others (21) or to eulogize others in god's presence (22) to utter obscene words; (23) flatuence or breaking wind; (24) to offer ordinary material for worship when one can afford the better; (25) to eat without offering it as *naivedya* to the Deity; (26) not to offer fruits or flowers peculiar to and available in the sesaon to god first before distributing them to others; (27) to offer a fruit etc. a part of which has been already eaten or taken by others; (28) to sit with one's back turned towards the Deity; (29) to bow to other persons before offering obeisance to the Deity; (30) negligence in greeting one's preceptor and failure to speak to him; (31) self-extolment and (32) scandalising any deity in the presence of god Viṣṇu's image.

22. May the Supreme Ruler bearing the Śrī-Vatsa mark protect me in the latter part of the night, and god Janārdana, carrying the sword, at about dawn (the fifth part of the night); may god Dāmodara at dawn; and Viṣṇu the Lord of the universe who manifested himself as Time (or the destroyer of all) protect me during twilights.

23. The discus Sudarśana, the rim of which is fierce like fire raging at the time of the destruction of the universe, whirls about when discharged by the Lord. Oh Sudarśana do completely and thoroughly burn down the inimical forces to ashes just as fire, helped by the friendly (favourable) wind, immediately consumes (heaps of) dry grass.

24. Oh mace (Kaumodakī)! You are dear to the invincible Lord. The sparks discharged by you are as formidable as the blow of Indra's Vajra (or thunderbolt), thoroughly crush down to powder all the evil spirits like Kūṣmāṇḍa, Vināyaka, Yakṣas and Rākṣasas, goblins and *grahas* (spirits harassing children). Reduce to powder all my enemies.

25. Oh excellent Conch Pāñcajanya: Blown by Lord Kṛṣṇa you, by your terrific blast, shock the hearts of enemies with convulsions of fear. May you drive away demonic spirits like Yātudhānas, Pramathas, ghosts, Mātṛkā (female spirits posing as mothers) Piśācas, Brahma-rākṣasas, and other evil-eyed spirits.

26. Oh sharp-edged excellent sword Nandaka! When directed by the Lord cut down to pieces all the army of my enemies. Oh shield brilliant like hundred Moons (decked with hundred moon-like buttons), cover up the eyes of the enemies, destroy the sight of the evil-eyed enemies.

27-28. May all the *grahas* (planets) and comets, Ketus, human beings, reptiles, carnivorous animals, Bhūtas (goblins), and sins which caused us fear, who stood in the way of our welfare, go immediately to utter destruction through the missile in the form of the utterance of the Divine name and form.

29. May the mighty Lord Garuḍa who is the embodiment of the Veda and who is extolled in *Bṛhad*, *Rathantara* and other *Sāma* hymns and Viṣvaksena protect us from all dangers with (utterance of) their names.

30. May all the names, forms, vehicles, arms of Lord

Hari protect us from all dangers. May his excellent attendants guard our intellect, *Indriyās* (cognitive and conative powers), mind and vital airs.

31. The glorious Lord himself factually constitutes everything gross and subtle, with or without forms. By the force of this truth may all our troubles come to an end.

32. To those who have realised the identity of the Lord with themselves, the Lord himself stands undifferentiated. But he with his own Māyā wields powers known as ornaments, weapons and insignia.

33. On the strength of the same factual reality, may the omniscient glorious Lord Hari protect us everywhere at all times, with all his manifestations, as he is omnipresent.

34. May the glorious Lord Narasiṁha who dispels the fear of the world by his roar and who eclipses the brightness of all luminaries by his all-absorbing brilliance and splendour, protect us in all directions, in the corners of directions, in the upward and downward directions, on all sides, from within and from without.

35. Oh Indra, this spiritual armour imbued with the power and spirit of Nārāyaṇa has been taught to you. Equipped with this spiritual armour, you will easily conquer the leaders of the Asura hosts.

36. Whomsoever does the wearer of this (*Nārāyaṇa Kavaca*) see with his eyes or touch with his feet, he is instantaneously freed from fear.

37. From no quarter does fear affect him who possesses this mantra. Neither from kings, robbers, evil planets (and such other wicked powers) nor from ferocious animals like tigers has he anything to fear.

38. In ancient times, there was a Brāhmaṇa of Kuśika *gotra* who had this sacred mantra mastered by him. He cast off his body by yogic process in a desert.

39. Once upon a time Citraratha, the Lord of Gandharvas, surrounded by ladies crossed in his aerial car the place of the death of the Brāhmaṇa.

40. Immediately he fell down along with his heavenly car with his head downwards. On the advice of sage Vālakhilya, he collected together the bones of the Brāhmaṇa and

immersed them in the Sarasvatī where it bends to the East. He took his bath and returned home amazed (at this instance).

Śrī Śuka said :

41. He who listens to this *Kavaca* at the opportune time (of fear, danger etc.) and devoutly fixes his mind on this Mantra becomes free from fear in every respect, and is reverentially respected by living beings.

42. Indra, the performer of hundred sacrifices, learnt this sacred lore (*Nārāyaṇa Kavaca*) from Viśvarūpa. He conquered the demons in the battle and enjoyed the sovereignty of the three worlds.

CHAPTER NINE

(Viśvarūpa killed. Gods defeated by Vṛtra, advised to approach Dadhīci)

Śrī Śuka said :

1. Oh Parīkṣit (the scion of the Bharata race), we have heard the report that Viśvarūpa had three heads, one used to drink Soma, the other wine, and the third used to eat food.

2. They say that in sacrifices, he directly offered the share of gods to them with due respect declaring loudly their names (e.g. *Indrāya idam*—this is the share of Indra), for gods were his forefathers.

3. Himself being the sacrificer, he managed secretly to offer the share in the sacrifices to the Asuras also, for due to his affection to his mother, he oblated some share to them.

4. Indra, the king of gods, noticed his contempt and faithlessness to gods and his sham righteousness. Being afraid (lest Asuras should be powerful) he immediately cut down his (Viśvarūpa's) heads in wrath.

5. The head that used to drink Soma became the bird Kapiñjala; the head drinking wine, a sparrow (Kalaviṅka); the head eating food became the Tittiri bird.

6. Even though Indra was powerful enough, he accepted the sin of assassinating a Brāhmaṇa with both his hands folded. But at the end of the year for self-purification of the elements constituting himself, he distributed that sin proportionately in four parts to the earth, water, trees and young women.

7. They say that the earth accepted the fourth part of the sin on condition that pits excavated in it are (automatically) filled up (in due course). Barren soil is the form of the *Brahmahatyā* which became manifested in the earth.

8. The trees accepted one-fourth of the sin on condition of the boon that a chopped part of the trees will grow with greater force. *Brahmahatyā* is seen exhibited in trees in the form of gum.

9. Women took over one-fourth of the sin on condition of getting the boon that they would ever cherish the passion of love (even during pregnancy). This sin (of killing a Brāhmaṇa) appears in the form of menstrual discharge from month to month in them.

10. The waters accepted the (remaining) one-fourth of the sin on condition of increasing the quantity of the substance with which it is mixed. The sin appears in the form of bubbles and foam on the water. He who throws away the bubbles etc. removes that sin from water.

11. Tvaṣṭṛ whose son was slain (by Indra) then performed a sacrifice for the birth of an enemy, the killer of Indra: "Oh enemy of Indra grow in strength and kill the enemy (Indra) without delay" (prayed Tvaṣṭṛ).

12. Then arose from Dakṣiṇāgni or *Anvahārya-pacana*, a demon terrific in appearance like the god of death, at the end of the destruction of the worlds, at the end of Yugas.

13. Everyday he increased in size, in all directions, to the extent of the distance covered by the shot of an arrow. He looked like the burnt top of a mountain and was bright like the mass of evening clouds.

14. His hair of the head and beard was red like heated copper and his eyes were fierce like the mid-day Sun.

15. He, as it were, held the vault of the heaven pierced

with his brilliant trident. He was dancing and roaring and was shaking the earth by his gait.

16. By his deep valley-like mouth he was as if drinking the surface of the sky, and was licking the stars with his tongue, and was as it were swallowing the three worlds.

17. He was now and then yawning his mouth which displayed his terrible tusks—seeing him people were stricken with panic and ran away to all the ten directions.

18. That most ferocious wicked demon was called Vṛtra as he, the son of Tvaṣṭṛ, covered the whole world with the darkness, by the shadow of his person.

19. The prominent leaders of gods, along with their armies, attacked him, and discharged at him streams of their respective divine missiles and arms. But he swallowed them up completely.

20. The gods were thereby amazed. All of them got despondent. With their splendour eclipsed, they approached Nārāyaṇa, with their minds composed, as he is the *antaryāmin*, the inner controller.

21. May we get protection from him (the Supreme Lord) of whom even the god of Death (or the god presiding over Time) is afraid—the god of death to whom the five elements (constituting the universe) viz., the wind, the sky, the fire, the water and the earth, and three worlds (along with their denizens) and (the rulers of the worlds like) god Brahmā and others and we (ordinary) gods pay homage out of great fear.

22. Like an ignoramous person desiring to cross the sea with the help of a dog's tail, is he who approaches for protection to someone else than him (the Supreme Lord) who is absolutely free from egotism (or curiosity), perfectly serene and passionless, all whose wishes are fulfilled through the realization of his own blissful self and is unconditioned by limitations.

23. The same god, in his fish incarnation, to whose broad big horn Manu fastened his boat in the form of the earth and crossed the danger of deluge, will certainly protect us, his dependants, from the danger caused by Vṛtra, the son of Tvaṣṭṛ—a danger which is difficult to be got over.

24. Formerly (at the beginning of the creation of the universe) god Brahmā, the self-born deity, was all alone. He was all but fallen from his lotus (-abode, growing out of the navel of Viṣṇu) in the terrible waters of the deluge, by the roars of the heavy billows whipped up by stormy winds. But he got over from that danger by (the grace of) Viṣṇu. May the same God be our protector.

25. That Supreme Sovereign, though all alone, has created us by his Māyā. It is through his grace and by imitating him that we carry on the work of creation. We each being proud as independent rulers, cannot see his form, though he is present before us.

26. When he finds that we are excessively harassed by our enemies, he, though eternally existent, by his Māyā takes incarnation by assuming forms of gods (e. g. Vāmana), sages (e. g. Paraśurāma), sub-human beings (e. g. Varāha, Nṛsiṁha), and human beings (Rāma, Kṛṣṇa), in every yuga-period and protects us, regarding us as his own.

27. To that God alone we shall all resort for asylum as he is worthy of it. He is our own Deity (object of worship). He manifests himself as the universe and yet is different from it. As the ultimate cause of it, he is himself both *Pradhāna* and *Puruṣa*. The Supreme Soul will positively confer happiness and prosperity on us who are his devotees.

Śrī Śuka said :

28. While they were praying thus, Oh great King, the Lord revealed himself in their hearts, as wielding a conch, disc and a mace.

29-30. On seeing the Lord whose eyes were like full-blown autumnal lotus, and waited upon on all sides by sixteen attendants (like Sunanda and others) who were just like himself (wielding conchs, discs etc.) with the exception of *Śrīvatsa* mark and the *Kaustubha* gem, all of them were overwhelmed with joy, and lay prostrate before him on the ground like a stick, and rising slowly, began to praise him.

The gods said :

31.* Salutations to you whose power (to confer Svarga and other blessings) is (revealed in) the sacrificial performance. Hail to you who are our Age (The Time-Spirit) defining the time limit of the fruits of sacrifices etc. to be enjoyed. Bows to you who hurl your disc (at our enemies to destroy them). We salute you who are addressed with a number of blessed epithets.

32. Oh Lord ! One who is born posterior to the Creation (of the universe) is incapable of knowing the highest nature which transcends the *guṇas*. We can merely bow to you who are the controller of the three courses of *guṇas* (or the modes of existence as gods, human and sub-human beings).

33. Bow to you, Oh Lord, who are designated by the syllable OM ! Oh Nārāyaṇa (occupant of Cosmic Waters), Vāsudeva (the Abode of the worlds), the most ancient person, the supreme person, possessor of supreme glory and auspiciousness, the supremely blessed and merciful, the absolute (one without a second), the support of the world, the only protector of the universe, the ruler of all, consort of Lakṣmī (the goddess of fortune and bliss) !

When the ascetics of the highest *paramahaṁsa* order deeply meditate upon you by means of the highest concentration of the mind through eight-fold yogic processes the real *dharma* of the *Paramahaṁsas*, viz., the adoration of the Lord, becomes manifest and realized in their pure hearts. Thereby the door of darkness of their hearts is broken open and you stand revealed as the inherent bliss of the Soul, in the regions of their hearts.

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* VR. : Hail to you who have empowered sacrifices and made them the cause of creation, and who bless (us) with longevity for performance of sacrifices and other forms of worship. You wield the disc Sudarśana for the protection of your devotees and the remembrance of whose glorious name is efficacious enough to ward off danger immediately.

VJ. : We salute you who are the creator of sacrifices. You keep *jīvas* bound in *saṁsāra*. You continue the cycle of creation and destruction again and again. You incarnated as Sudarśana (for the protection of the world). You are addressed with various sanctifying names. (We bow to you).

34. You create, protect and destroy this universe constituted of (*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*) *guṇas* though you yourself are without any support, body or form, without any expectation of cooperation and help from us (the divinities presiding over various organs etc.) and without undergoing any transformation (within yourself). The cause of this sport of yours is simply beyond (our) comprehension.

35. Moreover, we do not properly understand whether your worship, like Devadatta (an ordinary person who builds a house and helplessly experiences joys and sorrows while staying therein) enters (as an *antaryāmin*) the various bodies (which are the products of *guṇas*) and depending upon other (*karmic*) forces helplessly reap the fruit of good or bad actions or whether you are an unconcerned witness (of such happenings) remaining delighted in yourself and naturally unruffled with your spiritual essence undiminished.

36. As a matter of fact, there is no contradiction in both the positions which are compatible in Your Lordship who are endowed with infinite variation of excellences, the absolute ruler of unfathomable greatness. You are far beyond the range of controversies of modern disputants who are strongly prejudiced as their minds are bewildered by the study of heretic scriptures teeming with doubts, (false) reasoning, wrong conclusions, (untrustworthy) authorities and bad logic. Your real essential Self is absolute, transcending all the products of Māyā. What is there that cannot be predicated of you, who, remaining concealed under Māyā, make the Māyā create any impossibility and your real self is free from both the above (contradictory) propositions. (There is no contradiction as there is no duality in you).

37. Just as a piece of rope appears to be a serpent (garland etc.) to those whose minds are prepossessed with the false notion of a serpent etc., (but appears factually a piece of rope to the right thinking men), you show yourself according to the views of the right-thinking persons or of prejudiced wrong-thinkers.

38. Again, the Lord is certainly the real essence of every existing thing and abides in all things. He is the ruler of all. He is the cause of all the causes (*Prakṛti* or *Brahma*) of

the whole of the universe. The illuminating power of the objects (intellect, senses) indicates the *jīva* but not him as he abides in all, as the Inner Controller (*Sarvāntaryāmin*). He is the only true existence conclusively left over (proved) by the process of elimination of double negation (*neti neti*).

39. Oh slayer of (the demon) Madhu! By tasting but once a small drop of the nectar-like sweet ocean of your glories, incessant stream of rapturous joy begins to flow uninterruptedly in the heart of great devotees. It makes them forget the apparent trifling bits of pleasures of senses actually seen (enjoyed on the earth) or heard (of as available in the heaven)—the devotees whose hearts find incessant and ecstatic delight in the Lord who is beloved friend of all beings and is the Soul (the Inner Controller—*antaryāmin*) of the entire universe. Under these circumstances, how is it that the saintly persons (devoid of love, hate etc.) who are skilful in achieving their high purpose (viz. Liberation) and who look upon you as their dear friend and a well-wisher, give up the service of your lotus-like feet whereby there is no return to the *Saṁsāra*, the transmigration of the Soul.

40. Oh Lord whose manifestation and mansion are the three worlds (or Oh Soul and the abode of the three worlds)! Oh God who dominate the three worlds (or who covered the universe in three steps)! Oh Guide of the three worlds whose majestic charm captivates (the minds of) the worlds! Even the demons like the sons of Diti and Danu and others are your glorious forms. Considering (however) that this is not the appropriate time for (giving free rein to) their (destructive) activities, you as a wielder of the rod (of punishment), dispense punishment (to them) proportionate to (the gravity of) their offence by assuming, through your Māyā Power, forms of gods (e.g. Vāmana), men (e.g. Rāma, Kṛṣṇa), beasts (such as Boar or Varāha), half-man half-beast (e.g. Narasiṁha, Hayagrīva), aquatic animal (e.g. the Fish or the Tortoise). In the same way, Oh glorious Lord, if you deem it fit, kill this son of Tvaṣṭṛ (viz. Vṛtra).

41. Oh Father! (Nay) Oh grand-father! Since we are yours and have completely submitted to you, and since our heart has been firmly attached (lit. fettered) with the bond of

love (evolved) through (our) meditation on the pair of your lotus-like feet, and as you have accepted us as your own by the revelation of your person, be pleased to cure the fever (torments) of our hearts, by your bright, charming, soothing, smiling looks which are rendered still more gracious by your compassion and with the nectarine drops in the form of sweet words proceeding from your lips, Oh Faultless one !

42. Oh glorious Lord ! To what extent can we respectfully communicate to you our specific entreaty any more than the sparks of fire (which emit little light) can bring illumination to the god of Fire ? (as a matter of fact, it is superfluous). For you indulge in your pastime with the divine Māyā which is the instrumental cause of the creation, maintenance and the destruction of the whole world, and you, as Brahman as well as *Antaryāmin* (the Inner Controller of bodies) reside within the hearts of all the multitudes of beings, and from without as *Pradhāna* (the Primordial matter) you are their material cause, and thus experience the peculiarities of the place, time, body and conditions (of all beings). With your body (untouched and untainted) like the sky, you are a detached witness of the thoughts of all. You are the transcendental *Brahman*, the Supreme Soul.

43. (You are omniscient). Hence please accomplish for us of your own accord (without waiting for being requested for it by us) that object (of ours) desiring which we have resorted to you and have sought refuge under the shade of your lotus-like feet which removes the fatigue of the transmigration of the Soul resulting from various sins. And you are the glorious Lord and the Supreme Teacher.

44. Therefore, Oh Lord, kill Vṛtra who has already swallowed up our powers as well as missiles, Oh Kṛṣṇa, and is now devouring the three worlds.

45. Salutations to you Hari, the reliever of sufferings—to Hari who is absolutely pure and abides in the cavity of heart remaining witness to the intellect etc. You are the eternal Bliss incarnate. Your glory is resplendent. You are beginningless and are cherished as a treasure by the virtuous. To wanderers in *Saṁsāra* seeking refuge with you, you are the

final destination to be reached at the end of *Saṁsāra*, the excellent fruit to be coveted.

46. Oh King ! Being thus reverentially and earnestly praised by gods, Lord Hari listened to the prayer offered to him and being highly pleased, he addressed them (as follows:).

The Lord said :

47. I am highly pleased with you, Oh great gods, for the knowledge enshrined in your eulogy which will awaken the memory of transcendental nature of their real Self among the beings and engender in them devotion unto me.

48. What is difficult to be attained when I am pleased, Oh great gods ? But he who knows the truth and cherishes devotion to me, does not covet for anything else than Myself.

49. The miserly fool who looks upon the products of the *guṇas* as real, does not know what is really good for himself and he who confers those objects (products of *guṇas*) on them at their request is of the same description (is equally ignorant).

50. A wise man, knowing for himself what the highest good is, does not prescribe the (path of) *Karma* (ritualistic actions) to the ignorant, just as an excellent physician does not allow the ailing patient unwholesome food even if he (the patient) may desire it.

51. May good betide you, Oh Indra ! Without delay you all go to Dadhyaṅ (Dadhīca or Dadhīci), the foremost of sages and beg of him his body which has been reinforced by *Brahma-Vidyā*, observance of vows and austerities.

52. Dadhyaṅ has completely realized his identity with Pure Brahman (untainted by Māyā or has mastered the *Pravargya*). He initiated the gods Aśvinikumāras in that knowledge which came to be called *Aśva-śiras*—horse headed (as at the time of imparting the knowledge, the sage Dadhyaṅ had a horse's head instead of a human one.[286] That Brahma-lore conferred immortality (*mokṣa* while alive) on those gods.

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286. Purāṇic quotations in the commentaries of ŚR., VR. etc. give the story as follows :

When Aśvinikumāras sought initiation in *Brahma-vidyā* from Dadhyaṅ, the sage was engaged in some religiuos rites. He told them to see him on

53. Dadhyaṅ, the son of Atharvan, taught the impregnable protective armour (called the *Nārāyaṇa kavaca*) full of my essence and imparted it to Tvaṣṭṛ. Tvaṣṭṛ gave it to his son Viśvarūpa who in turn taught it to you.

54. The sage is well-versed in Dharma (righteousness). When begged by Aśvinikumāras (your physicians) he will offer his body (i.e. the limbs of the body) to you. Then with the (bones of the requisite) limbs, the most powerful weapon will be forged by Viśvakarman (your artisan). With that weapon imbued with my power, you will cut the head of Vṛtra.

55. When he (Vṛtra) is killed, you will regain your former glory, missiles, weapons and wealth. May you be happy ! Nobody can trouble or destroy those who are devoted to me.

CHAPTER TEN*

(With Vajra forged, Indra fights)

Śrī Śuka said :

1. The glorious Hari, the protector of the universe, thus instructed Indra and disappeared at that very spot, while the gods, with unwinking eyes, were simply gazing.

2. Oh Bhārata (Parīkṣit) ! Solicited by gods thus (as per instructions of the Lord), the great-hearted sage of

some other occasion as he was then busy. In the meanwhile, Indra came to the sage and advised him not to impart Brahma-vidyā to Aśvins as they were merely physicians and hence unqualified. He further threatened to behead him, in case he initiated them in that lore. When Aśvinikumāras approached the sage and learnt of Indra's threat, they proposed a surgical operation in which the sage's head would be replaced by a horse's head and requested him to teach through the horse's mouth. In case Indra beheaded the horse's head, they would substitute his original human head. The sage preferred to keep his word and not his head. He allowed the Aśvins to perform the operation and imparted to them the Brahmavidyā with a horse's head on his shoulders.

* JG—No commentary on this chapter.

Atharvan Clan was delighted and addressed them jokingly (with a smile), as follows:

3. "Oh gods! (Presiding deities of the senses as you are) can you not imagine the excruciating and unbearable pain caused to embodied beings at the time of death—a pain that deprives them of consciousness.

4. In this world, (one's own) body is the dearest thing coveted by living beings who have a desire to live. Who can dare to donate it even to Viṣṇu, should he beg for it ?"

Gods said :

5. Oh Brahman ! Is there anything which is difficult to part with in the case of great persons like your honour, who are compassionate to all beings, and whose noble deeds are worthy of being praised by people with hallowing reputation.

6. There is no doubt that persons who are solely devoted to achieve their own objects, do not (care to) understand the danger faced by others (the donors). If they could realize it, they would not beg for it. (In the same way, the donor also does not appreciate the difficulty of the seeker of his help). If the donor were (aware of the seeker's danger and) capable of granting it, he would never say "No". (Hence understand our danger and grant our request).

The sage said :

7. It is with a desire to hear from you the (exposition of) Dharma (righteousness) that you were replied that way (by me). Here I cast off my body which is dear to you (due to its utility) as (some day) it is sure to leave me.

8. Oh Lords ! A person who does not desire to earn religious merits out of compassion to living beings or aspire after glory by means of this ephemeral body, deserves to be pitied even by immobile creatures.

9. That one should sympathetically feel sorrow or delight at the grief or joy of other beings, is the eternal law of righteousness (*Dharma*) practised by persons with holy renown.

10. Alas! What a pity! that a mortal does not show benevolence (by helping others) with his wealth, sons and relatives and his body—all of which are transient, of no use to him and (actually) belong to others.

Śri Śuka said :

11. In this way, Dadhyaṅ, the scion of the Atharvan Clan, made up his mind and uniting his individual Soul with the glorious transcendental Brahman, gave up his ghost.

12. He controlled his senses, vital airs, mind and intellect and fixed his gaze on the Reality. He severed all bonds and established himself in union with the Brahman, and (in the process) was not aware of the falling away of his body.

13. Then Indra was equipped with Vajra (the thunderbolt) forged out of the bones of the sage, by Viśvakarman (the chief artisan of gods). He (Indra) was endowed with the Lord's power and felt himself mighty.

14. Surrounded by all the hosts of gods and eulogised by assemblies of sages, he shone riding his excellent elephant (Airāvata), to the delight of the three worlds.

15. In order to cut him down, Oh King! he attacked vehemently Vṛtra who was surrounded by the leaders of Asura forces, just as wrathful Rudra does in the case of the god of Death (at the end of the world).

16. Then ensued the most ferocious fight between the gods and the demons, on the bank of the Narmadā, at the beginning of the Tretā Age (in the first round of four yugas in this *manvantara*).

17-18. The demons, headed by Vṛtra, did not tolerate the sight of Indra armed with Vajra and resplendent in his original glory and surrounded by Rudras, Vasus, Ādityas, Aśvinikumāras, manes, Fire-gods, Wind-gods, Ṛbhus, Sādhyas, and Viśvedevas, on the battle-field.

19-21. Namuci, Śambara, Anarvā, Dvimūrdhā (a two-headed demon), Ṛṣabha, Ambara Hayagrīva (a demon with horse's head), Śaṅkuśiras, Vipracitti, Ayomukha, Puloman, Vṛṣaparvan, Praheti, Heti, Utkala, and the sons of Diti and Danu and Yakṣas, Ogres in their thousands, of whom Sumāli and Māli were prominent—all armoured and decorated with gold ornaments—resisted the vanguard of Indra's army which was unapproachable even to the god of Death.

22-23. The haughty and furious demons were fearless and unbewildered. With a lion-like roar, they attacked gods with maces, iron bars, arrows, barbed shafts and javelins.

They covered the leaders of gods with volleys of weapons and missiles like pikes, axes, swords, *Śataghnīs* (cylindrical pieces of wood, 4 cubits long and studded with iron spikes) and *Bhuśuṇḍis* (a Śataghnī-like weapon with iron spikes, one exceeding the other in length), on all sides.

24. The gods, covered with net-like volleys of arrows showered on all sides with one arrow closely following the other, were rendered invisible like luminaries behind the screen of clouds in the sky.

25. The streams of the volleys of missiles and weapons did not reach or touch the soldiers in the army of gods, for they were cut down to pieces in thousands on their way in the sky, by gods with quick hands.

26. When their stock of missiles and weapons was exhausted, they showered the army of gods with mountain peaks, trees and stones, and the gods cut them to pieces as before.

27. Finding that the gods were unhurt and safe despite the volleys of weapons and missiles, and unaffected by trees, shower of stones and different mountain peaks, the demons led by Vṛtra were filled with consternation.

28. Just as abusive language employed by the vulgar against the exalted persons does not disturb them, all the efforts repeatedly made against the army of gods by the demons became ineffectual, as Lord Viṣṇu was favourable to them.

29. The demons who were not devoted to Hari, had their arrogance and pride of fighting crushed, when they found that all their efforts had become infructuous. With their *morale* deeply affected, they thought of fleeing from the battle-field deserting their leader at the initial stage of fighting.

30. The self-possessed warrior Vṛtra saw that his followers are running away. Finding his army broken through terror and fleeing, he laughed loudly and spoke.

31. The heroic person spoke the following words appropriate to the occasion and agreeable to the high-minded souls:

"Oh Vipracitti, Namuci, Puloman, Maya, Anarvan, Śambara, listen to me.

32. This death is inevitable to whoever is born. No escape from any side from this, has been devised (by any one). If the attainment of heaven and glory could follow death, who would not court such a desirable and welcome end ?

33. Two modes of death are approved of (by the great), but they do not easily come to one's lot, namely, (1) he who, engaged in the Yogic process, controls his vital airs, concentrates himself on Brahman and casts off his body and (2) one who, in the fore-front of battle, gives up his body on the battlefield (the bed of warriors), without turning his back."

CHAPTER ELEVEN

(Vṛtra, Hari's devotee, fights)

Śrī Śuka said :

1. Oh King, while he (Vṛtra) was explaining the course of righteousness to the demons, they were struck with terror, and were bent on fleeing, and hence paid no heed to the words of their leader.

2-3. The great Asura, found his army of demons being shattered and scattered like a leaderless mob by gods to whom time was favourable and got enraged. The enemy of Indra, being indignant, was deeply pained, and warding the gods off, he spoke to them scoldingly, Oh King.

4. "What are you gaining by striking on the back of the fleeing soldiers who are no better than the excreta of their mothers ? The slaughter of the cowards does not contribute to the glory or lead to heaven those who pride themselves as valiant.

5. Oh insignificant fellows, if at all you have faith in fighting or some courage at heart and have no longing for sensual vulgar pleasures, try to stand before me at least."

6. The wrathful demon possessed of vast strength and formidable figure, threatened the army of the gods thus and gave out a loud roar which made people lose their consciousness.

7. By that terrible roar of Vṛtra all the hosts of gods verily fell unconscious on the ground as if struck down by a thunderbolt.

8. Just as a leader of a herd of elephants in the period of his youthful madness, tramples over a bed of lotuses, Vṛtra of irrepressible passion for fighting, shaking the earth by his might and with his trident raised, trampled under his feet the army of gods which was terrified and lying with closed eyes.

9. Indra, the wielder of Vajra, saw him and got extremely enraged. He hurled his heavy mace at his enemy who was rushing towards him. But Vṛtra sportively caught it in his left hand while it was coming with irresistible force.

10. The enemy of Indra, possessing terrible prowess, was extremely enraged and by that very mace, he struck the vehicle of the great Indra, viz., the elephant Airāvata on its forehead (its temples). All present in the battlefield warmly appreciated this feat (of Vṛtra).

11. Airāvata which was smitten down by Vṛtra's mace, reeled down like a mountain struck by a thunderbolt. With blood coming out of its mouth, it retreated along with Indra for a distance of seven bows, as it was extremely afflicted with its mouth deeply wounded.

12. The great-souled Vṛtra did not hurl his mace against Indra who was deeply dejected in spirits as his vehicle, viz., the elephant was stunned. Indra whose wounded elephant recovered from its pain, by the touch of Indra's hand dripping with nectar, again took his stand (against Vrtra).

13. Oh King of kings, seeing Indra, his enemy the murderer of his brother, armed with the Vajra (thunderbolt) itching for a fight, he remembered Indra's wicked sinful deed (the murder of his brother) and filled with grief and infatuation he laughed and spoke.

Vṛtra said :

14. How glad I am that you, my enemy, the murderer of a Brāhmana, the slayer of your own preceptor and my brother, have stood before me. Oh most wicked fellow, how lucky is it that I shall discharge my debt by piercing your stony heart with my trident within a short time.

15. Just as a sacrificer desirous of heaven mercilessly lops off the head of a sacrificial beast, you cut off the heads of our innocent elder brother who had realized his Self, was a Brāhmaṇa and your preceptor, and who, reposing full confidence in you about his safety, was engaged in a sacrifice.

16. Being destitute of shame, grace, mercy and glory, you are fit to be censured by man-eaters for your misdeed. With your body painfully torn up by my trident and uncremated the vultures will devour you.

17. I shall propitiate the lords of goblins (*Bhairavas*) along with their retinue, by piercing the necks with my sharpened trident, of those ignorant followers who obey a wicked fellow like you, and who attack me with their missiles raised.

18. Oh valiant Indra, if you will cut off by force my head with the Vajra, I shall have discharged the debt of all beings (by my body) and shall attain to the regions (lit. the dust of the feet) of the high-souled ones.

19. Oh Lord of gods, why do you not hurl your unfailing Vajra on your enemy who is stationed before you. Do not entertain any doubt that like your mace, the Vajra will be ineffectual like a request made to a miserly fellow.

20. Oh Śakra, this Vajra of yours is sharpened and strengthened with the power of Lord Viṣṇu and the austerities of Dadhīci. Kill your enemy by that thunderbolt which is prompted by Viṣṇu's power, because where there is Hari, victory, fortune and excellences are to that side.

21. Concentrating my mind on the lotus-like feet of Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa as directed by him, with the ties of attachment to sensual pleasures cut asunder by the force of your Vajra, I shall cast off my body and attain to the region of sages.

22. He does not confer on persons whose minds are absolutely devoted to him, the wealth and affluence of heaven, the earth, and the netherworlds as it engenders passions, fear, anxiety, arrogance, discord, misery and physical pain.

23. Oh Indra, our Master causes obstructions in the efforts for attaining the three objects of human life, (viz, Dharma, Artha and Kāma). The grace of the Lord is to be

inferred from such obstructions, for it is the lot of those votaries who have given up everything for him (and have nothing of their own). This is extremely rare in the case of others.

24. (Contemplating over the Lord, Hari, Vṛtra addresses :) Oh Lord Hari, let me be again the servant of the servants of your devotees whose sole refuge is your feet. May my mind ponder over the excellences of the Lord of my life. May my speech extol them and may my body render service to you.

25. Oh treasury of Bliss and Grace ! I do not aspire after the post of Dhruva which is above the heaven; nor the position of god Brahmā, nor absolute sovereignty over the whole world or the overlordship of a subterranean region, nor do I covet for supernatural yogic powers nor for Liberation (which terminates the cycle of births and deaths)—if it means separation from you.

26. Oh lotus-eyed God, my mind eagerly yearns to see you, just as the unfledged young ones of birds anxiously wait for their mother or young calves tormented with hunger wish for the milk from the udders (of the mother cow) or a beloved lady dejected due to the absence of her lord who has gone to a distant country (waits for her beloved).

27. Bless me with friendship with the devotee of the Lord of excellent renown, while I am wandering in the cycle of Saṁsāra (transmigration of the Soul) as an effect of my *karma* (deeds). I may not form friendship with people whose minds are attached to their bodies, children, wife and house (property) due to the force of your Māyā.

CHAPTER TWELVE

(Vṛtra slain by Indra)

The Sage (Śuka) said:

1. In this way, Vṛtra who was eager to lay down his life (body) in the battle, and who thought death preferable to victory, seized his trident and attacked the Chief of gods, just

as the demon Kaiṭabha did against the Almighty Lord Viṣṇu, on the Cosmic waters of the deluge, Oh King.

2. Then, whirling with force his trident with prongs, dazzling like the fire of *Pralaya* (the dissolution of the universe), he hurled it at the great Indra. The valiant Vṛtra roared aloud and exclaimed in wrath, "Killed are you Oh wicked fellow".

3. Seeing that (trident) darting through the sky with a whirling motion, and unbearable to look at like a dazzling planet or meteor, Indra remained unperturbed. The wielder of thunderbolt i.e. Indra cut it with his Vajra of hundred joints, along with Vṛtra's arm which was long and stout like the body of the serpent lord Vāsuki.

4. Vṛtra whose arm was cut, became extremely enraged and dashing at Indra, he dealt a blow both to Indra and his elephant on the cheek. And the bolt slipped down from the hand of Indra.

5. Gods, demons, the companies of Cāraṇas and Siddhas applauded the most marvellous feat of Vṛtra, but seeing the critical plight of Indra, they shouted loudly in great anxiety, "Alas, Alas".

6. Being very much ashamed, Indra did not pick up his bolt which slipped from his hand in the presence of the enemy. To him Vṛtra said, "Oh Indra, take up your Vajra and kill your enemy. This is not the time for despondency".

7. With the exception of the Omniscient, beginningless, Eternal Person, the Controller of the creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe, victory does not always favour the belligerents equipped with weapons anywhere, as there are some occasions when their bodies are controlled by others (destiny).

8. It is due to the control of God (in the form of Time) that the worlds along with their guardian deities live and act, in spite of their will, like birds caught in a net. Hence it is the Time-spirit alone which is the cause of victory and defeat.

9. Not knowing that the Time (or god) is the cause of the power of the mind, the potency of the sense organs, physical strength, vital breaths, immortality or Liberation and death that people regard this gross body of theirs as the cause (of victory).

10. Just as a wooden doll or a mechanical toy-deer is controlled by the showman or the mechanism, similarly all the *bhūtas* (beings or elements) are subject to the control of god.

11. In the absence of his grace, neither the individual Soul, nor Prakṛti (primordial matter), nor *Mahat* (cosmic intelligence), nor ego, nor elements, nor the cognitive and conative organs or the mind is individually or aggregatively capable of the creative and other activities (pertaining to the universe).

12. He who is ignorant of this, regards his incapable Self as capable of doing this. But it is really the Lord who creates or evolves beings or elements from *Bhūtas*, and devours them through carnivorous beasts or withdraws the elements at his own sweet will.

13. It is at the favourable time that length of life, affluence, glory, power and blessings fall to the lot of man. They are reversed against them even against his will.

14. Therefore, one should be balanced, irrespective of glory and infamy, victory or defeat, pleasure or pain, life or death.

15. He who knows that *Sattva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas* are the modes of Prakṛti and not the qualities of the Soul, and that the individual Soul is merely the witness of their working, is not subjected to the bondage of *Saṁsāra*.

16. Oh Indra, look at me. I am defeated and deprived of the weapon and my arm in the battle. I am however endeavouring to the best of my ability to take your life.

17. This battle-field is like a gambling house where life is the stake, arrows are the dice and the vehicles like horses, elephants etc. are the board. Here it is not known who will be triumphant and who is defeated (to the last of the fight).

Śrī Śuka said:

18. Having heard the straightforward and guileless speech of Vṛtra, Indra expressed his respect. Picking up his Vajra and overcoming astonishment (at his charitable disposition), he laughed heartily and spoke.

Indra said:

19. Oh son of Danu, you are really a Siddha (one who has attained enlightenment) as your tenor of thought is such. You are a real devotee, with all your being, of the Lord, a friend of the universe.

20. Your respectable self has verily crossed the Māyā (deluding power) of Viṣṇu which infatuates the world, as your honourable self has given up his demonic nature and attained the level of exalted Souls.

21. It is certainly a great wonder that you who are *Rājasic* by nature, entertain unflinching faith and devotion in the glorious Lord Vāsudeva who is the embodiment of Sattva.

22. He who cherishes devotion to the glorious Hari, the bestower of Mokṣa, has as if sported in the ocean of nectar. Of what account are to him waters of the ditches and the pools (i. e. pleasures in the heaven)?

Śrī Śuka said:

23. Oh King, discoursing this way with a desire to ascertain the nature of Dharma (righteousness), those two leading veterans in fight, Indra and Vṛtra, possessed of extraordinary prowess, fought on.

24. Vṛtra, the vanquisher of enemies, whirled his terrible bludgeon made of black iron and hurled that dreadful weapon with his left hand at Indra, Oh noble king.

25. But the god with his bolt of hundred joints, simultaneously cut down that iron bludgeon as well as Vṛtra's hand which was like the trunk of an elephant.

26. The demon with both of his arms cut at the roots and streaming forth profuse blood shone like a mountain with wings chopped, and dislodged from the sky by being struck down by the wielder of thunderbolt.

27-29. With his lower jaw touching the earth and his upper jaw brushing the heavens, and with his mouth deep like the sky and with his lusty serpentlike tongue and with his large teeth looking like the god of Death, he was as it were swallowing the three worlds. With his extremely gigantic body he was shaking the mountains with his violent motion, and like a big mountain moving on feet, he was pounding the earth. He

thus assailed Indra and swallowed him up along with his vehicle namely the elephant Airāvata.

30. (Vṛtra swallowed them) as a big serpent of immense strength and indomitable power swallows up an elephant. Gods along with the protectors of the worlds and great sages observed Indra being swallowed up by Vṛtra and wailed despondently "Alas, how unfortunate"!

31. Though Indra was swallowed up by the chief of demons, he entered Vṛtra's belly. Protected as he was by the armour of the Supreme Person (Nārāyaṇa Kavaca) and by his Yogic powers and Māyā, he did not die.

32. Ripping open the abdomen of Vṛtra by his Vajra, the powerful vanquisher of Bala, came out of it and by his power lopped off the enemy's head, like the peak of a mountain, by his Vajra.

33. Whirling very rapidly and cutting on all sides the neck of Vṛtra, Vajra felled it on the ground at the proper time of Vṛtra's death in as many days (360) as are required for the heavenly bodies like the Sun for two *Ayanas* (the apparent motions of the Sun from the northernmost to the southernmost point and vice versa.

34. At that time kettle-drums were sounded in the sky, Gandharvas, Siddhas along with companies of great sages, joyously showered flowers on Indra glorifying him with panegyrics describing his great feat of killing Vṛtra.

35. Oh vanquisher of the enemies, while all people were looking on, from the body of Vṛtra there came forth a light (his effulgent Soul) and merged in the Supreme Being, transcending the universe.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

(*The Triumph of Indra*)

Śrī Śuka said :

1. When Vṛtra was killed, all the three worlds along with their guardian deities, with the exception of Indra, became immediately free from feverish anxiety and felt felicitous at heart.

2. Without bidding good-bye to Indra, gods, sages, manes, Bhūtas, demons and the followers of gods returned to their respective regions. Then dispersed Brahmā, Rudra, Indra and others. [According to GS, Indra did not return to Svarga. The very moment he killed Vṛtra, the sin of killing a Brāhmaṇa (*Brahma-hatyā*) assailed him and Indra had to fly away hurriedly and hide himself in the Mānasa lake. Indra's restoration took place after his performance of a horse sacrifice].

The King said :

3. Oh Sage, I wish to hear the cause of Indra's unhappiness whereby gods became happy, while Indra suffered agony.

Śrī Śuka said :

4. All gods along with sages who were agitated over the prowess of Vṛtra, begged Indra to slay him, but Indra being afraid of *Brahma-hatyā* did not wish to do so.

Indra said :

5. The sin of killing Viśvarūpa, a Brāhmaṇa, was graciously shared by women, the earth, the water and trees. Where can I wipe off the sin of killing Vṛtra, another Brāhmaṇa ?

Śrī Śuka said :

6. Having listened to him, the sages assured him, "May good betide you ! We shall help you in performing a horse-sacrifice. Please do not get afraid (of *Brahma-hatyā*).

7. Worshipping Lord Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Man, the universal Soul and the Controller of the Universe, by perform-

ance of the Horse-sacrifice, you will be absolved of the sin of massacring the world. What of one Brāhmaṇa like Vṛtra.

8. By singing the Lord's name, a person who slays a Brāhmaṇa or his own father, or a cow, or his own mother, or a preceptor, a sinner who eats a dog, or is of the lowest caste, becomes purified.

9. If with faith and reverence, the great sacrifice called *Aśvamedha* (Horse-sacrifice) be performed with our co-operation, you will not be affected by sin, even if you kill all the mobile and immobile creation along with Brahmā. Then what of killing a wicked demon like Vṛtra?

Śrī Śuka said :

10. Thus strongly impelled by Brāhmaṇas, Indra killed his enemy Vṛtra. As soon as Vṛtra was killed, the sin of slaying a Brāhmaṇa attacked Indra.

11. Indra suffered agonies by that and did not get any peace of mind, for to selfrespecting persons, excellences like sovereignty do not give any pleasure if they bring censure.

12-13. He saw the *Brahma-hatyā* chasing after him. She was like a Cāṇḍāla woman in form. Her body was trembling with age and she was a victim of consumption. She put on blood-stained garments. With her grey hair scattered, she was asking Indra to stop and stand. She was polluting the atmosphere on the road with her breath stinking like rotten fish.

14. The thousand-eyed god ran in all directions in the sky, Oh Lord of the earth. He speedily rushed to the north-east and entered the Mānasa lake, Oh king.

15. He stayed within the fibres of a lotus therein without getting any subsistence, for he had the fire-god as his purveyor of food.[287] He remained unperceived in the water for one thousand years, pondering over his absolution from the sin of *Brahma-hatyā*.

16. During that period (of Indra's absence), Nahuṣa who possessed the capacity of a ruler due to his knowledge,

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287. ŚR. points out the impossibility of fire-god's entry into water. VC. & GS. attribute his non-entry to the guards of Rudra, for Agni purveys oblations of Varuṇa.

austerities and strength of yoga, governed the third heaven. But as his intelligence became blind by the arrogance of affluence, and power was reduced to the state of sub-human being (boa constrictor) by Indra's wife, Śacī.[288]

17. Then Indra whose sin was warded off by meditation over the protector of Truth, namely, Lord Viṣṇu, returned as he was invited by Brāhmaṇas. His sin of *Brahma-hatyā* was deprived of its power by Rudra, the god of that direction, and it did not assail him as he was protected by Lakṣmī, spouse of Viṣṇu.

18. The Brāhmaṇa sages approached him and consecrated him according to religious formalities for the performance of the Horse-Sacrifice by which Hari is propitiated.

19-20. When the Supreme Person who embodies within himself all the divinities, was thus worshipped by the great Indra, in the Horse-Sacrifice which was performed duly through the Brāhmaṇas who were expositors of the Veda, the huge mass of sin of slaying Vṛtra the son of Tvaṣṭṛ was reduced to naught by that very worship of the Lord just as the frost is evaporated by the Sun.

21. By performance of the Horse-sacrifice according to scriptural injunctions through sages like Marīci who conducted it on proper lines, Indra worshipped the ancient Supreme Person, the presiding deity of sacrifices and thus being completely free from sin (of *Brahma-Hatyā*), became as great as before.

22. This great narrative which celebrates the glory of Lord Viṣṇu of hallowed feet, absolves one of all sins. It extols the virtues of devotion and the greatness of the devotees of the Lord, and describes the purification of the great Indra from *Brahma-hatyā* and his final victory.

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288. Nahuṣa thought that as he was Indra, former Indra's wife would be ipso facto his own. When Śacī received an invitation from Nahuṣa, she, as per advice of Bṛhaspati, requested him to come to her in a palanquine borne by sages like Agastya. Nahuṣa while being borne thus, in his eagerness, touched Agastya with his leg and asked him to hasten (*Sarpa, Sarpa*). Agastya being thus insulted cursed him to be a serpent.

23. Wise persons should always read this narrative. They should listen to it on the days of *Parvans* e.g. the new-moon-day and the full-moon-day. It contributes to the prosperity and glory, removes sins, bestows victories over enemies, is conducive to auspiciousness and confers long life.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

(*The Previous Birth of Vṛtra—King Citraketu*)

Parīkṣit said:

1. Oh Brāhmaṇa sage, how is it that the sinful Vṛtra who, by nature, was predominated by *Rajas* and *Tamas*, entertained unflinching devotion to the glorious Lord Nārāyaṇa.

2. Even in the case of gods who are constituted of pure Sattva and in that of pure-souled sages, generally devotion to the feet of Viṣṇu is not engendered.

3. In this world there are beings which are as numerous as the particles of dust. Among them, it is very few like the human beings who can practise righteousness.

4. Oh best of the Brāhmaṇas, there are generally very few among them who seek Liberation from Saṁsāra. Out of thousands of seekers of Mokṣa, it is only one who can get rid of attachment (to sensual pleasures etc.) and attain liberation.

5. Out of the crores of Siddhas who are free from attachment and have realized the Self, a person who is absolutely devoted to Nārāyaṇa and of serene mind is very difficult to find, Oh great sage.

6. But how is it that Vṛtra, the fiend incarnate, the tormentor of all the worlds, was thus so steadfast in devotion to Kṛṣṇa (Lord Viṣṇu) in the heat of fierce battle.

7. On this point, we entertain a great doubt and wish to hear eagerly about it, Oh Master, for he gratified god Indra by his heroism on the battlefield (and did not remember God out of Indra's fear).

Sūta said:

8. The venerable Śuka welcomed the relevant and interesting query of the devout king Parīkṣit and replied as follows:

Śrī Śuka said:

9. Oh King, listen attentively to this legendary history as heard by me from the mouth of Vyāsa, Nārada and even of Devala.

10. It is traditionally reported, Oh King, that there was a sovereign ruler of the world called Citraketu, in the country called Śūrasena. To him the earth yielded whatever he desired.

11. He had ten million wives. Though he was capable of procreation, he did not get any issue from them.

12. Though he was endowed with handsomeness, generosity, youth, noble lineage, deep learning sovereignty, affluence and other excellences, the husband of barren ladies was overweighed with anxiety.

13. Neither his affluence nor his queens of beautiful eyes or the universal sovereignty of the earth became a source of delight to him.

14. Once upon a time, the glorious sage Aṅgiras, during his course of wandering over the world, arrived by chance to his palace.

15. The king honoured him with due formalities such as respectfully standing, offering articles of worship, and with a collected mind, he sat near the sage who was fully entertained as a guest and was seated comfortably.

16. The great sage respectfully showed every courtesy to the king who was sitting near him on the ground and bowing down modestly. Addressing him as 'Mahārāja' (Oh great King), he spoke to him as follows:

Aṅgiras said:

17. Are you in good health? Are your subjects and yourself well? Just as the individual Soul (man) is protected by seven constituents (viz. *Mahat*, *Ahaṁkāra*—ego and the five subtle elements), the king is protected by the constituent elements of the state, namely ministers, allies, treasures, ter-

ritories, fortifications, and militia and his own office of kingship.

18. By placing oneself under the control of Prakṛtis, the king should enjoy sovereignty and regal prosperity. Similarly the Prakṛtis (ministers, subjects etc.), with their grievances removed, become enriched and benefited by king.

19. Are your wives, subjects, ministers, servants, members of trade guilds, councillors, citizens, country people, tributary princes, and sons obedient to you?

20. He who has controlled his mind has all these (mentioned above) obedient to him. All the worlds along with the guardian deities offer to him dutifully due honour and worship.

21. It appears that your mind is not pleased with you or with others. I find that your countenance is overshadowed with anxiety as you presumably have not achieved your object or desire.

22. The king who was thus subjected to various alternative questions by the sage who knew (everything) by intuition, bent down with modesty, and then addressed the sage, with a desire for progeny, Oh King.

Citraketu said:

23. Oh worshipful sage! What is not known to yogins (like you) who have destroyed their sins, what lies within and without embodied beings, by means of their penance, spiritual knowledge and concentration?

24. But as I am prompted by your worship who knows what is weighing on my mind, it is with your permission that I am speaking it to you.

25. (My) sovereign power and affluence which are covetable even to the guardians of the world, do not give me any delight. Childless as I am, these are like other things (such as garlands, sandal-paste etc.) to a person overwhelmed with hunger and thirst.

26. Oh highly blessed one, kindly therefore protect me who along with my ancestors, am on the verge of falling into a dark abysmal hell. Please do that unto us whereby we shall cross this hell which is difficult, by blessing us with progeny.

Śri Śuka said:

27. The venerable, merciful son of Brahmā who was thus entreated, caused *caru* (rice cooked in milk) to be prepared for Tvaṣṭṛ and worshipped Tvaṣṭṛ with its oblations.

28. The seniormost queen both in age and status among the queens, was Kṛtadyuti by name. The Brāhmana gave the remainder of the sacrificial offerings to her.

29. Then the son of Brahmā told the king, "Oh king, one son will be born to you. He will give you both joy and grief". Saying thus, he departed.

30. Queen Kṛtadyuti conceived a son through Citraketu by the eating of that *caru*, just as (the constellation) Kṛttikā bore a son to the Fire-god.

31. Her foetus which was begotten by the king of Śūrasena gradually developed every day, just as the Moon waxes in the bright half of the month.

32. In due course, after the arrival of the proper time, a son was born, giving great joy to the inhabitants of Śūrasena who heard the news.

33. The king who was overjoyed, purified himself by taking a bath and adorned himself. He made the Brāhmaṇas pronounce pious benedictions and caused them to perform the *jātakarma* ceremony.

34. He gave them gold, silver, garments, ornaments, villages, horses, elephants and six crores of cows.

35. Like a showering rain-cloud, the noble-minded king showered other persons with objects desired by them for the future affluence, glory and longevity of the prince.

36. Just as a penniless person develops love for his hard-earned money, the father, a royal sage, developed, day after day, great affection for his son who was got after great difficulty.

37. To the mother Kṛtadyuti, the affection caused by infatuation developed into intense love, but it created feverish desire for a child in her co-wives.

38. By fondling the child every day, Citraketu showed so much intensive love to his wife who gave birth to a child, that he ignored others.

39. Those co-wives tormented and reproached themselves out of envy, the misery of childlessness and the indifference of the king.

40. Fie on the childless accursed woman who is not loved in the house of her husband and is treated with contempt, like a maid-servant, by other co-wives blessed with children.

41. What agony can there be to maid servants who are constantly waiting upon their master and whose services are appreciated by him? We are unfortunate like the maid-servant of maid-servants.

42. The co-wives, in this way, developed intense hatred, as they were burning due to the wealth in the form of child to their co-wife and their very existence being not approved by the king.

43. The women who lost their good sense through hatred and became cruel-hearted administered poison to the prince, in their unappeasable hatred for the king.

44. Kṛtadyuti was quite innocent about the grievous sin committed by her co-wives. Looking at him (her son) she thought him to be asleep and went about in the house.

45. The clever woman realizing that the child had slept for a pretty long time ordered the nurse, "Oh auspicious lady bring the son to me".

46. The nurse approached the sleeping child and saw him with the pupils of his eyes turned upwards and bereft of breathing, senses and life. (She cried out) "Oh I am undone" and fell down on the ground.

47. Then hearing her painful shriek and violent beating of the breasts with her hands, the queen entered in haste and approaching the child, she saw that it had met with sudden death.

48. Overpowered with grief, she fell on the ground and with her hair and garments in disorder, she lost her consciousness.

49. Then all the men and women who were in the harem of the king heard the wailing. Coming there, they equally shared her grief and became extremely distressed and even those who perpetrated that heinous crime pretended to weep.

50. Hearing that his son died from an unknown cause, the king lost his eye-sight. He staggered with faltering steps on the way. The king who was surrounded by his ministers and Brāhmaṇas fell in deep swoon, due to his grief which was infinitely intensified by love.

51. The king fell at the feet of his dead son. His (king's) hair and garments fell in disorder. He heaved heavy sighs. His throat was choked with tears and he was not able to speak.

52. Observing that her husband was overwhelmed with grief as the son, the only scion of the family, was dead, the virtuous queen burst out into lamentations of various sorts enhancing the afflictions of the subjects and the ministers.

53. Bathing her breasts decorated with paintings of saffron and sandal-paste, by means of tears mixed with collyrium, and with her dishevelled hair dropping flowers (used for hair decoration), she cried out loudly and in diverse tones like a female osprey.

54. "Oh Creator, you are extremely foolish, for you act contrary to your (process of) creation, because here the elderly people survive when the young ones die. If you are of a contrary nature, then you must be an eternal enemy of all creatures.

55. If there be no order in the birth and death of embodied beings, it may be due to their own *Karmas*. But the tie of affection which you have engendered for the growth of your creation, is cut asunder by you, due to the death of the child.

56. (Addressing the child) Oh dear child ! It is not proper for you to abandon a wretched and helpless (mother like) me. Please have a look at your father who is tormented with grief. It is through you that we shall easily cross the dark hell which is impassable for childless persons. Please do not go far away, with the merciless god of Death.

57. Oh child, get up. These young children, your friends, are calling you to play. Oh Prince, you have slept for too long a period. You must have been famished with hunger. Enjoy breast-feeding and remove the grief of our relatives.

58. Unfortunate as I am, I have not (as usual) seen your lotuslike face with cheerful looks and innocent smile, Oh

child. Or is it that you are taken away by the merciless (Yama) and have gone to the other world from which there is no return, for I do not hear your sweet words."

Śrī Śuka said :

59. While she was bewailing her dead son through such various laments, Citraketu became extremely tormented with grief and cried at the top of his voice.

60. While the husband and wife were thus lamenting, the subjects, both men and women, who were devoted to them verily wept aloud and everything was lifeless.

61. Knowing that everybody was reduced to such wretched plight and lost all consciousness and were leaderless (for consolation) the sage Aṅgiras came along with Nārada.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

(Consolation of Citraketu)

Śrī Śuka said :

1. Bringing back to consciousness the king, with their soft and wise words, the sages Aṅgiras and Nārada spoke to the king who was overpowered with grief, and was lying like a dead person by the side of the dead child.

2. "What can be your relationship, in the previous and the present birth, Oh great King, with the child whom you are mourning ? How was he related to you in the previous birth, the present birth and will be related in the future one ?

3. Just as the grains of sand come together and separate by the force of the stream of water, so are embodied beings brought together and separated by Time.

4. Just as seeds may or may not produce corn, similarly *Bhūtas* prompted by God's Māyā may or may not produce *Bhūtas*.

5. We, you, the mobile and immobile creatures which are contemporaneous with us, were not so before the present

birth nor are so in the present birth, nor shall be so after death. (Due to the nonexistence of these before and after, they are unsubstantial or unreal like dreams).

6. The Lord of *Bhūtas* who is himself unborn (and therefore imperishable) and has no purpose to achieve, like a playful boy, creates, protects and destroys the *Bhūtas* by means of *Bhūtas* which are created by him and hence dependent on him.

7. Oh King, the body of a son is born from the body (of the mother) through another body (namely that of the father) just as a seed sprouts forth from another seed. But the occupant of the body is eternal like earth and other principles.

8. It is from eternity that this (above-mentioned) distinction between a body and the occupant of the body (the Soul) has been presumed through ignorance, as the distinction between the class or the generic property (*jāti*) and the individuality of a thing (*vyakti*) is conceived as existing in the thing itself (such distinction between interdependants like *jāti* and *vyakti* are untenable).*

Śrī Śuka said :

9. When king Citraketu was thus consoled by the words of the Brāhmaṇa sages, he wiped out with his hand, his

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* After verse No. 8, the text before VJ. adds four verses.

(1) Just as the difference or changes due to fuel are wrongly attributed to the fire, similarly the conditions affecting the body, viz., difference, birth, decline, growth and destruction are wrongly attributed to the *Jīva* who is distinct from the body. This misconception is due to *Karma*.

(2) It is due to Jīva's intimate relation to the body and the false identification of the body with the Soul, that the above-mentioned conditions (of the body) appear to be the conditions of the *Jīva* as in a dream. As everything else is a source of fear, one should not ponder over anything leading to evil consequences.

(3) Just as the appearance of a serpent or a tiger or another (frightening) object like it, in a dream, causes fear, as the dream appearance is identified with the reality in a wakeful condition, so is the *Saṁsāra* due to the misconception grown since eternity.

(4) The idea of the world of sons (or relatives) and other possessions depends on the mind. It is due to the influence of the Ego which creates likes and dislikes in the mind and leads to merits and demerits. One should clear away the ignorance in the form of the notions like me and mine, and fix one's mind on the all-powerful Omnipresent Lord Vāsudeva.

face which was withered through grief for his son, and addressed them thus.

The king (Citraketu) said :

10. Who are you both so full of spiritual knowledge, the most worshipful ones among the adorables who have come here disguised as *Avadhūtas* ?

11. For, persons who have realized Brahman and who are dear to the glorious Lord, range over the world in the guise of mad persons, for guiding and counselling sensually-minded people like me.

12. (For example) Sanatkumāra, Nārada, Ṛbhu, Aṅgiras, Devala, Amita, Apāntarātma, Vyāsa, Mārkeṇḍeya and Gautama.

13. Vasiṣṭha, the glorious Paraśurāma, Kapila, Bādarayaṇi (Śuka), Durvāsas, Yājñavalkya, Jātūkarṇya and Āruṇi.

14. Romaśa, Cyavana, Datta, Patañjali, Āsuri, the sage Vedaśiras, the sage Bodhya, and Pañcaśiras.

15. Hiraṇyanābha, Kausalya, Śrutadeva, Ṛtadhvaja—these and other masters of spiritual powers go about in the world with the object of imparting spiritual knowledge.

16. Therefore, you both are the masters of a stupid and ignorant brute like me. Enlighten me with the lamp of your knowledge—me who am plunged into the blinding darkness of ignorance.

Aṅgiras said :

17. Oh King, I am Aṅgiras who blessed you with a son as you longed for one. This is the veritable son of Brahmā, the worshipful divine sage Nārada.

18-19. Finding you, a devotee of the Supreme Person, plunged in the deep impassable darkness of grief for the son, though you are not fit to be so affected, we have arrived here to help you out of it, with our grace. For, you are dear to Brāhmaṇas and votary of the Lord and thus do not deserve to be so despondent.

20. When I visited your house, at that very time (of our first meeting), I would have imparted to you spiritual knowledge. But knowing your insistence and longing for

something else (viz, the birth of a son), I blessed you with a son.

21-22. Now, you experience the agony suffered by persons having sons. In the same way (are the agonies of persons who have) wives, houses, wealth, power and prosperity of various kinds, objects of enjoyment like sound etc., fleeting powers of sovereignty, the earth, kingdom, the army, the treasury, servants, ministers, friends and relations.

23. Oh King Śūrasena, all these are the sources of grief, delusion, fear and affliction, for they are momentary like (the proverbial) city of Gandharvas in the sky, and unreal like a dream, delusion and fancies.

24. They are mental images, for they are perceived without being real or substantial and disappear the next moment. For a man brooding over objects through the force of tendencies of actions (*karma*) in the previous birth, various activities proceed from the mind.

25. In fact, this body of embodied beings is constituted of gross elements, conative and cognitive senses. It is said, by the knowers of the reality, to be the cause of various afflictions and torments to the *Jiva* who identifies itself with its body.

26. Therefore, examining carefully the real nature of the Soul and with concentration of mind, give up the belief in the permanence of the objective world as it implies duality. Betake yourself to renunciation and serenity of the mind*.

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* Additional verses in VJ.'s text of the Bh. P. :

(1) A king named Bhoja dreamt that he subsisted on the remnant of the food (out of the dishes) of his enemy. He was therefore overcome with nausia, grief, delusion, fear and distress and became utterly miserable.

(2) (In the dream) some (of his enemies) who nursed age-old animosity and vengeance, carried away the objects he enjoyed; some killed his dependents; some abducted his wives while others beheaded him.

(3) Awaking from this dream overflooded with unending miseries, he reflected deeply over it. He got disgusted and renounced his house (worldly life).

(4) Externally appearing as insane, he visualized the Supreme Soul within his heart, free from attachments. Overcoming conflicting states of the mind he established it in the Supreme Brahman called Śrī Nārāyaṇa, untouched by the conditioning perishable body. In this absorbed state of meditation (in *a-samprajñāta-samādhi*), he totally forgot that he was conditioned by the body.

Nārada said :

27. After purifying yourself (i.e. after disposing of the dead body of the child and taking a bath thereafter) accept from me the *Mantropaniṣad* (Vide Infra Ch. XVI, 18-25). By bearing this in mind and meditating over it, you will visualize Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa within seven nights.

28. Oh great King, by resorting to the feet of Saṅkarṣaṇa, ancient votaries of the Lord like god Śiva and others, gave up the illusion of this world which implies duality and attained immediately to his greatness which was neither equalled by nor surpassed by anyone else. You will also attain to that eminence within a short time.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

(*Citraketu's Realization of Lord Ananta*)

Śrī Śuka said :

1. Then, Oh King, the divine sage Nārada (by his yogic powers) showed the spirit of the departed prince to the relatives who were mourning and spoke to the spirit.

Nārada said :

2. Oh Jīva, God bless you. Have a look at your mother, father, friends and relatives who are deeply afflicted with grief for you.

3. Please enter this body of yours. Surrounded by your friends enjoy pleasures throughout the remaining period of your life—pleasures provided to you by your father and ascend the royal throne.

Jīva said :

4. In what life were these my father and mother, while I was revolving in the cycle of births in the species of gods, subhuman beings and human beings by my *karmas*.

5. For, all persons are by turns related to others as relatives, cousins, enemies, mediators, friends, indifferent men and bitter adversaries.

6. Just as commodities like gold and other articles change hand from one customer to another and one place to another, similarly a *Jīva* wanders from one species of existence to another.

7. Even during the life-time of a person, the relation even of men with animals is temporary. The attachment of mineness lasts so long as the particular relation exists.

8. In the same way, the relation of a *Jīva* who has entered the womb of a particular species is transient. For, by himself, *Jīva* is eternal and as such unrelated to his body and is therefore without attachment (as a son etc.). The sense of belongingness lasts so long as and only with him, with whom he is associated due to his *karma* (and not after death. Therefore grief for me is unnecessary).

9. This Ātman is eternal. He is not subject to decay or change. He is subtle and free from birth. He is the basic support (as the material cause of the universe) of all. He is self-illuminating. Being all-powerful he manifests himself as the universe by the *guṇas* of his Māyā.[289]

10. To him no one is very dear, nor anyone hateful. He has no kith or kin or an alien. He is one, the witness of the working of the minds of friends and foes (who do good or evil).

11. The Ātman does not accept (experience) the good or evil (i.e. pleasure or pain) nor is he the recipient of the fruit of *karmas* (namely kingship). He is a dispassionate witness of cause and effect and not their enjoyer. He is thus unconditioned by body and is independent.

Śrī Śuka said :

12. After explaining thus the spirit departed. The relatives of that *Jīva* then became wonderstruck. They cut asunder their bonds of affection to him and gave up sorrow.

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289. VJ. explains : The Jīva is eternally related with Hari who by the *guṇas* of his Māyā creates his universe. Hari is eternally connected with all. He is eternal, not conditioned by change or decay, subtle but absolutely one. He perceives everything as he is the Lord of all. Thus the relation of a Jīva with any person is temporary.

13. The relatives took away the dead body and performed the suitable obsequies. They set aside their affection which is so difficult to be rid of, and which causes grief, delusion, fear and distress.

14. The queens who killed the child and whose charms waned due to the infanticide, became ashamed. They performed the expiation for infanticide as enunciated to them by the Brāhmaṇas on the bank of the Yamunā, remembering what the Brāhmaṇas have explained to them, Oh Mahārāja.

15. Citraketu who was thus spiritually awakened by the words (of advice) by the Brāhmaṇa sages, came out of the dark deceptive well in the form of domestic life, just as an elephant extricates himself out of the mire in the lake.

16. Having taken ablution in the Yamunā according to the sacred precepts, and having poured out oblations of water (to the Pitṛs), he, with his senses properly controlled, bowed to the two sons of god Brahmā (viz. Nārada and Aṅgiras) in silence.

17. The venerable sage Nārada gladly taught this great lore to the king who was their devotee and who resorted to them for protection and had fully controlled his mind.

18. "OM ! Salutation unto you, Oh glorious Lord Vāsudeva. We contemplate (mentally pay obeisance to) you. We bow to Pradyumna, Aniruddha and Saṅkarṣaṇa (all the *vyūhas* of the Lord).

19. Obeisance to You who are pure, absolute knowledge, the very embodiment of supreme bliss, delighted with yourself, serene and above the notion of duality.

20. Hail to you who, through realization of your blissful character, kept yourself above the waves (the feelings of love, hate etc.) caused by Māyā. Salutation to the great Hṛṣīkeśa (the Supreme Master of Senses) whose body is the universe.

21. May he protect us—he who shines alone by himself and is beyond the reach of speech and other senses and the mind; who is pure consciousness and has no name or form and who is the cause of the law of causation (and hence above it).

22. Bow to you Supreme Brahman on whom the universe (the product of cause and effect) is based, from whom it evolves and in whom it dissolves and thus pervades everything in the universe, just as products of earth do with reference to the earth.

23. I salute the Brahman which pervades everything from within and without like the sky but to whom the *Prāṇas* (organs of activity) do not touch (by their conative force) nor do the mind, intellect and cognitive senses comprehend him (by their power of cognition).

24. It is only when these—body, senses, vital airs, mind and intellect—are charged by his part or presence (*aṁśa*) that these carry out their functions and not otherwise, just as an unheated piece of iron (does not emit heat or light.) What is called the 'spectator' is another designation of yours in the state of wakefulness (of the Jīva. He has no independent existence apart from you).

25. Salutations to you the Supreme Person, designated by the sacred symbol OM, the possessor of Supreme Might, whose lotus-like feet are adored in great love with the lotus-bud-like joined palms by all the great Sātvatas (votaries of the Lord). I reverentially bow to you, the most excellent controller of all."

Śrī Śuka said :

26. Having taught this prayer-lore to his devotee who sought his protection, Nārada along with Aṅgiras, went to the region of god Brahmā, Oh King.

27. Citraketu observed the course of that lore (of meditation and prayer) with perfect concentration as per instructions of Nārada. For one week he subsisted on water only.

28. Then at the end of the seventh night, the king attained to permanent overlordship of Vidyādharas through the practice of that lore.

29. Then after some days, his mental power became illumined through the practice and repetition of the same lore, and he went near the feet of Śeṣa, the God of gods.

30. He saw the Lord Śeṣa white like a lotus fibre, clad in blue garments and adorned with brilliant crown, armlets,

girdle and wristlets, and with gracious countenance and reddish eyes, attended upon by multitudes of great Siddhas.

31. All his sins having been destroyed at the sight of the Lord, the sage Citraketu whose heart became cleansed of all impurities, approached the Most Ancient Person in silence. Due to surging devotion, his eyes were flowing with tears of love and his hair were standing on ends due to ecstasy, he prostrated himself before him.

32. Repeatedly moistening with his tears of love the altar under the lotus-like feet of the glorious Lord, and his power of expression was being choked up by his overpowering love and devotion, he was not for a long time able to praise him properly.

33. Then, composing his mind by the force of reason and having restrained the senses from going out to external objects, he addressed the following words to the father of the world, the embodiment of the Sātvata Śāstra, i.e. *Pañcarātra* (or whose body stood described in the *Pañcarātra* scriptures).

Citraketu said :

34. Oh unconquered Lord ! (Despite your unconquerableness) you have been vanquished by self-controlled righteous persons of impartial and unruffled minds. They, in their turn, are conquered by You. You are so very gracious that you bestow your own self upon your devotees whose minds are completely free from desires.

35. Oh glorious Lord ! The creation, preservation and destruction of the universe is your prowess—a sport. The (so-called) creators of the universe are merely the portion of your portions. They, however, regard themselves severally as creators and vainly vie with one another.

36. You are at the creation, destruction as well as during the intervening period of the subtlest atom as well as (of the universe) of the largest dimensions. But you are (yourself) devoid of this triad of limitation. You are that unchanging constant who exist at the beginning and end as well as in the interim of all created things.

37. The egg of the universe is enveloped by seven sheaths of the earth and other elements etc., each outer envelop being

ten times the extent of the enclosure inner to it. This egg-like universe together with millions and millions of other universes appears just like an atom on your head. Hence, you are called Ananta, the infinite.

38. Oh Controller of the universe ! Those persons are really beasts who, in their thirst for objects of pleasure propitiate the deities concerned (like Indra, who are but your parts only) and not you—for, the blessings (so conferred upon them) come to an end with the extinction of the deities, just as the good fortunes of the followers of a king perish with the fall of that royal house.

39. Oh Supreme Lord ! Even if worldly desires are entreated of you who are pure knowledge and consciousness and not a product of *guṇas*, they do not grow like the fried seeds (which cannot sprout forth). For all the pairs of opposites (e.g. love—hate, leading to rebirth) are the result of *guṇas* (and you are above them).

40. Oh unconquerable one ! When you propounded the pure *Bhāgavata Dharma* (the righteous path leading to the realization of the glorious Lord), you have conquered all (made all your own). For sinless sages (like Sanat-kumāra) who are possessionless and free of desires and find delight in the Supreme Soul, resort to that Dharma (or to you) for Liberation.

41. Here *in the Bhāgavata Dharma* men do not cherish crooked, differential notions such as 'I', 'you', 'mine' and 'yours', (as is in other cults, as that of sacrifice). Whatever (act) is performed with the notion of such differences is impure, perishable and full of sin, (like *himsā*).

42. What good to one's own self or to another can accrue from a *dharma* (path of religion) or what benefit can be gained through a *dharma* which is harmful to oneself and to others. It is irreligion, for pain is caused to oneself through self-mortification and sin is committed by offending others.

43. Your vision by which you expounded the *Bhāgavata-dharma* never goes astray from reality. Hence, the noble Souls who do not regard the multitudes of the mobile and immobile being as different from you follow that *dharma*, Oh Lord.

44. It is no miracle that all the sins committed by men

are annihilated at your sight, for even an outcaste like a Cāṇḍāla becomes liberated from the cycle of birth and death, by hearing your name once only, Oh glorious Lord.

45. Oh Lord, we have got our heart cleansed of all the impurities by your very sight. How could that which the divine sage, your own devotee, has said, turn out to be untrue?

46. Oh Infinite Lord ! As you are the Soul of the world, you know everything that is done in this world by people. You are the Creator and Preceptor of the world. There is nothing new to be specially made known to you, as there is nothing to be revealed to the Sun by the fire-flies.

47. Salutations to you, Oh glorious Lord, who are the master and controller of the creation, sustenance and destruction of all the worlds. You are the purest of the pure (*Paramahaṁsa*). Your real nature is incomprehensible to bad yogins who entertain the notion of difference.

48. The creators of the world (e.g. god Brahmā and other gods who preside over the conative organs) (are activated) when you breathe (become active). When you (wish to) see, the gods (like the Sun who preside over the cognitive organs,) are able to get perception. The globe of this earth is (insignificant) like a mustard seed on your head. My Salutations to you, Oh glorious Lord of a thousand heads.

Śrī Śuka said :

49. Lord Ananta who was thus eulogised, was pleased with him. He spoke out to Citraketu the king of Vidyādharas, Oh scion of the Kuru family (Parīkṣit).

The glorious Lord said :

50. Oh King, it is by the precept (of the means of propitiating me) taught to you by Nārada and Aṅgiras and by the practice of that spiritual lore and by my sight that you have fully achieved your purpose.

51. I am verily all the created beings, their Soul and their support. I am the Veda the Supreme Brahma and both of these are my eternal form.

52. One should understand that his own Self is pervading the whole of the universe (as the subject of experience)

and that the universe is resting on the Ātman (i.e. is superimposed on the Soul) and that both (one's own Self and the universe) are pervaded by me (as the prime cause).

53. Just as in a state of profound slumber, one sees the universe (i.e. the various objects in it) in his own Self, and waking up from the dream, he finds himself alone and in a particular place (of sleeping such as a bed-room).

54. Similarly wakefulness etc. are the conditions of Jiva and are the products of Māyā with reference to Ātman. Therefore, one should remember that Paramātman is only a witness.

55. Recognize me to be that Ātman or Brahman through whom the Jīva in a sleeping condition, regards himself as in deep sleep. I am absolute bliss beyond the range of *guṇas* or the senses.

56. That knowledge is the Supreme Brahma—knowledge which is found in a person who remembers his experiences during sleep and wakefulness—a connecting link as well as the *differentia* between the two states of experience.

57. When the Jīva forgets my real nature, he regards himself as different from me and this is the cause of his Saṁsāra, in which he goes from birth after birth and suffers death after death.

58. Having attained birth in the human species here, where the knowledge of the Self (as detailed in scriptures) and the wisdom, i.e. direct knowledge and perception of the Self, can be developed, he who does not realize me, can never find peace and happiness.

59. Remembering that in the Pravṛtti Mārga (i.e. the path of *karma*) there are great afflictions and contrary results (of the expected fruit), and there is fearlessness, i.e. Liberation (Mokṣa) in the Nivṛtti-Mārga (the path of cessation of activities), a wise man should desist from the path of *karma*.

60. A pair of husband and wife perform (ritualistic) acts for getting pleasure and avoidance of misery. But there is no escape from misery nor the attainment of happiness, as a result of ritualistic performance.

61-62. Having thus realized that the consequences go contrary to expectation of persons who in their pride regard themselves to be clever, and having realized the subtle nature

of the Ātman which transcends the three states (viz. state of awakeness, dream and deep sleep), and being completely free (from the desire) for the pleasures of this world and the next, through one's power of discrimination and finding satisfaction and pleasure in one's knowledge and wisdom, a person should devote himself to me (completely).

63. Realization of the unity of the individual spirit and the Supreme Soul is the real objective to be attained through all possible means by yogins whose intellect and power have acquired acuteness through yogic meditation.

64. If you bear in mind my advice and bring that into practice carefully, you will soon be blessed with knowledge and wisdom and attain Liberation, Oh King.

Śrī Śuka said :

65. Having comforted Citraketu in this way, the glorious Lord Hari, the father and the preceptor of the world, and the Soul of the universe, immediately disappeared there while Citraketu was looking on.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

(Citraketu cursed by Pārvatī)

Śrī Śuka said:

1. Having bowed to the direction in which Lord Ananta disappeared, Citraketu, the Vidyādhara, the sky-ranger went his own way (in the sky).

2-3. Possessed of indefatigable physical power and undiminished acuteness of senses, and eulogised by sages, Siddhas and Cāraṇas as a great Yogī, he (Citraketu), for a period of 1,000 million years, sported in the caverns of the great Kulācala (sumeru) (the boundary mountain), which automatically supplies the desired objects to the occupants. He made the Vidyādhara ladies chant the glories of Lord Hari.

4-5. Once upon a time, while he was going by his resplendent aerial car, gifted to him by Viṣṇu, he saw Lord Śiva surrounded by Siddhas and Cāraṇas and having embraced in his arm the goddess Pārvatī seated on his lap, in the assembly of sages. Approaching near her, he laughed loudly and spoke out within the hearing of the goddess.

Citraketu said :

6. (Look here), here is the preceptor of the world himself, the expounder of Dharma to all embodied beings, the head of the assembly (of sages etc.), sits in a posture coupled with his wife.

7. He has matted hair on his head and performs austere penance. He is the president of the assembly of sages well versed in Vedas, but he sits with his wife on his lap, like a shameless vulgar fellow.

8. Generally, even ordinary people embrace a woman in secluded places, but this observer of great vows indulges in dalliance with his wife, in an open assembly.

Śrī Śuka said :

9. Even Lord Śiva of unfathomable mind laughed out heartily on hearing it, and kept quiet in that assemblage. The members of the assembly also followed his example.

10. The goddess angrily spoke to the impudent Citraketu who was proud of his own self-control, and who passed unbecoming remarks against Lord Śiva, about whose irresistible powers he was ignorant.

Pārvatī said :

11. Is this now the ruler of the world and the punisher thereof? Is he competent to mete out punishment to wicked and shameless fellows like us?

12. Neither god Brahmā nor the sons of Brahmā like Bhṛgu, Nārada and others, neither Sanatkumāra nor Kapila and Manu comprehended *Dharma* (righteousness), for they raised no objection to Hara's transgression of *dharma*.

13. This impertinent wretched Kṣatriya insults wise gods and sages, and reproves this preceptor and father of the

world whose lotus-like feet are meditated upon by the above-mentioned (great personages), and who is the very embodiment of the highest *dharma*. Therefore, this fellow should be punished.

14. This haughty self-conceited person does not deserve to be allowed to approach the feet of Lord Viṣṇu which are reverently worshipped by pious sages.

15. Oh wicked fellow ! Go forth hence to the most wicked demonic existence of *Asuras* so that you may not again speak ill of the great, Oh child.[290]

Śrī Śuka said :

16. Citraketu who was thus imprecated, got down from the aerial car, and propitiated Satī (Goddess Pārvatī) paying her obeisance with his head bent low, Oh Parīkṣit.

Citraketu said :

17. I accept your curse with my folded palms, Oh Mother. Whatever is pronounced by gods about mortal being is something predestined for him.

18. In this whirling wheel of *Saṁsāra*, a creature, being deluded by ignorance, wanders experiencing pleasure and pain, everywhere, at all times.

19. Neither one's self nor another is the creator of pleasure and pain. It is only the unwise who regards himself or another person as the author of pleasure and pain.

20. (All this Saṁsāra is the product of *Guṇas*). In this stream of *Guṇas*, what is the distinction between a curse and grace? What is the heaven or the hell? And what is the difference between pleasure and pain ?

21. It is the glorious Lord alone who creates all beings by dint of his Māyā power. To these are ordained bondage and liberation, pleasure and pain, but he himself is above them all.

22. To him none is dear or hateful; none a cousin or a relation; none is friend or an enemy; he is equal to all

290. GS. explains that Pārvatī was really sympathetic towards Citraketu, but the curse was a reproof against his audacity.

everywhere and absolutely pure. He has no attachment for pleasure. How can there be wrath in him ?

23. It is however the outflow of his energy called Māyā manifested in meritorious or sinful acts, that becomes the cause of pleasure and pain, good and bad, bondage and liberation. birth and death of embodied beings, and causes transmigration of the Soul.

24. Therefore, Oh wrathful Goddess, I do not propitiate you for relieving me from your curse. But Oh Satī (Pārvatī), please forgive me for what you consider as an unrighteous expression from me.

Śuka said :

25. Having propitiated Lord Śiva and goddess Pārvatī in this way, Citraketu left by his aerial car, while they looked wondering.

26. Then the glorious god Rudra (Śiva) spoke to Pārvatī while gods, sages, Siddhas and his attendants were listening (reverentially).

Rudra said :

27. Oh beautiful lady (possessor of dainty waist), you have seen the nobleness of the high-souled servants of servants of Hari of miraculous deeds and how they are free from desires (of any kind).

28. All who are devoted to Nārāyaṇa are not afraid of anybody for they see the same Reality in *Svarga*, *Mokṣa* and even in hells.

29. It is through the sporting activities of the Lord that the Soul is invested with a body and experiences pairs of opposites like pleasure and pain, birth and death, grace and curse, through contact with the physical body.

30. The notion of desirability and undesirability with reference to pleasure and pain is certainly illusory and false, and it is the result of man's lack of discrimination and knowledge. For it is like the difference (between the experience of pleasure or pain by seeing oneself to have become a prince or a pauper in a dream) felt within oneself or the imputation of

the notion of a serpent on a garland of flowers (while one is awake).*

31. To persons who are bearing intense devotion to venerable Lord Vāsudeva and whose power lies in spiritual knowledge and renunciation, no object is worth seeking or resorting in this world.

32. Neither I, nor god Brahmā, nor Sanatkumāra or Nārada or the sons of God Brahmā, sages, nor the great gods who are but parts of his parts comprehend his intention. We do not know his real nature though we regard ourselves as independent rulers.

33. To him nobody is beloved or hateful, nobody is his own or an alien. Hari being the Ātman (inner controller) of all beings is the beloved of them all.

34. This highly blessed Citraketu is a beloved follower of the Lord. He looks upon all as equal and is serene. I am also beloved of Lord Viṣṇu. Therefore, I did not get angry with him.

35. You need not, therefore, wonder about (the behaviour of) high-souled men who are devotees of the Supreme person Viṣṇu—the votaries who are tranquil by nature, and regard all beings as equal.

Śrī Śuka said :

36. Having heard the explanatory speech of the glorious Lord Śiva, the goddess Pārvatī got over her feeling of wonder and became appeased and calm in mind, Oh King.

37. Even though the votary of Viṣṇu, Citraketu, was most competent to retaliate the Devī's curse by counter-curse, he accepted it bowing down his head (with great respect and humility),—which is the characteristic of righteousness.

38. Assuming the body of a Dānava, Citraketu was born in the Dakṣiṇāgni of Tvaṣṭṛ, and became famous as Vṛtra. He

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* VR. : The *Jīva* is an individual constituted of pure consciousness. The difference as a god or man or a sub-human being with reference to *Jīva* and the desirable and undesirable states (e.g. pleasure and pain, birth and death, grace and curse) are due to the lack of discrimination. It is caused by eternal *Karma* and induces one to identify oneself with the physical body. Moreover, this notion of difference is like pleasant and unpleasant sights in a dream.

was, however, endowed with spiritual knowledge and wisdom (despite his birth as a demon).

39. In this way I have narrated to you everything which you enquired about the cause of Vṛtra's birth as a demon, and his devotion to Hari.

40. Hearing this sacred history of the noble-minded Citraketu and the glory and greatness of votaries of Viṣṇu, one becomes liberated from the bondage (of Saṁsāra).

41. He who gets up early in the morning and recites this episode with reverence, and observing silence, meditates on Lord Hari, attains to the highest region (*Mokṣa*).

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN*

(*The Birth of the Maruts*)

Śrī Śuka said:

1. Pṛśni, the wife of Savitṛ (the fifth son of Aditi) gave birth to three daughters, namely, Sāvitrī[291], Vyāhṛti[292] and Trayī[293] and (nine sons, namely,) Agnihotra[294], Paśu[295], Soma[296], Cāturmāsya[297] and the five great sacrifices[298].

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* In the introduction of this chapter, ŚR. states that this chapter is in continuation of the first six chapters in which the progeny of the first four sons of Aditi has been enumerated. He underscores the allegorical significance of this chapter by explaining what deities are described here.

291. The deity presiding over the holy Gāyatrī Mantra.

292. The deity presiding over the three mystical syllables, viz., *Bhūḥ*, *Bhuvaḥ* and *Svar* usually repeated after OM. These are prefixed to the Gāyatrī Mantra. They stand for the earth, the intermediate region and the heaven.

293. The deity presiding over the three Vedas, viz., Ṛgveda, Yajurveda and Sāmaveda.

294. The deity presiding over the acts of offering oblations into the sacred fire.

295. The presiding deity of animal sacrifices.

296. The deity presiding over the Soma Sacrifice.

297. The presiding deity over the three Cāturmāsya sacrifices performed at the beginning of the three main seasons, viz., the summer, the rainy season and the winter.

298. The names of the five great sacrifices (*Mahāmakha*) are as follows:

2. Oh dear Parīkṣit ! Siddhi, the wife of Bhaga (the sixth son of Aditi), brought forth three sons, namely, Mahiman, Vibhu and Prabhu, and a beautiful pious daughter called Āśis.

3. Out of the four wives of *Dhātṛ* (the seventh son of Aditi) Kuhū[299] bore Sāyam[300]; Sinīvālī[301] Darśa[302]; Rākā[303] Prātar[304]; Anumati[305] Pūrṇamāsa[306] respectively.

4. Samanantara or Vidhātṛ (the eighth son of Aditi) begot on Kriyā the Fire-gods called Purīṣya[307]. Carṣaṇī was the spouse of Varuṇa (the ninth son of Aditi. He is the deity presiding over water). To her was reborn Bhṛgu (the son of Brahmā).

5-6. Vālmīki, another son of Varuṇa, was a great Yogī. They say that he was born from an ant-hill. The sages Agastya and Vasiṣṭha were born of Mitra and Varuṇa who, in a jar, deposited their semen that was discharged at the sight of and in the vicinity of the celestial damsel Urvaśī. Mitra (the 10th son of Aditi) begot through Revatī three sons, namely, Utsarga, Ariṣṭa, and Pippala.

7. We are told that the king of gods, Indra, (the 11th

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(1) *Brahmayajña* : Propitiation of the ancient sages. It consists of teaching and chanting the Vedas.

(2) *Pitṛyajña* : Grateful acknowledgement of our debt to our departed forefathers. This includes *tarpaṇa* or pouring water as oblations in their memory and for their gratification.

(3) *Devayajña* : Propitiation of gods through *homa* (pouring oblations in the sacred fire uttering their names).

(4) *Bhūtayajña* : Offering a portion of our food to all sub-human beings in acknowledgement of our debt to them.

(5) *Nṛyajña* : Worship of our fellow beings. It consists of offering food and shelter to an *atithi* (A traveller staying for only one day).

These five daily sacrifices are binding on every householder (Vide Manu 3.70-71).

299. The deity presiding over the last night of a dark fortnight.
300. The presiding deity over the evening.
301. The deity presiding over the 14th night of a dark fortnight.
302. The presiding deity over the last day of a dark fortnight.
303. The presiding deity of the last night of the bright fortnight.
304. The presiding deity of the morning.
305. The deity presiding over the 14th night of a bright fortnight.
306. The deity presiding over the last day of a bright fortnight.
307. The five deities presiding over the sacred fires known as Purīṣya.

son of Aditi) procreated through Paulomī or Śacī three sons, namely, Jayanta, Ṛṣabha and the third Mīḍhusa, Oh child !

8. Urukrama who was god Viṣṇu who appeared as Vāmana through his own divine Māyā (and who was the 12th son of Aditi) begot on his wife Kīrti, a son called Bṛhacchloka who was the father of Saubhaga and other sons.

9. We shall narrate in detail later (in Skandha VIII) the feats, excellences and the deeds of the high-souled son of Kaśyapa, namely, Vāmana, and also how he incarnated as the son of Aditi.

10. Now, I shall describe to you the sons of the sage Kaśyapa from his spouse Diti. Among them were born the great devotees of Viṣṇu, namely, the glorious Prahlāda and Bali.

11. Diti had two sons, namely, Hiraṇyakaśipu and Hiraṇyākṣa who were respected by Daityas and Dānavas. They were described (formerly in Skandha III).

12-15. The wife of Hiraṇyakaśipu was a Dānava lady called Kayādhu. She was the daughter of Jambha and was given in marriage to Hiraṇyakaśipu. She gave birth to four sons, namely, Saṁhrāda the eldermost, and Anuhrāda, Hrāda and Prahlāda. Their sister was Siṁhikā by name. She got from Vipracittia son called Rāhu whose head was lopped off by Hari with his disc (Sudarśana) while he (Rāhu) was drinking ambrosia. Kṛti the wife of Saṁhrāda gave birth to Pañcajana. Dhamanī the wife of Hrāda bore Vātāpi and Ilvala. It was Ilvala who cooked Vātāpi for the celebrated guest Agastya.

16. Anuhrāda brought forth through his wife Sūrmyā two sons Bāṣkala and Mahiṣa. The son of Prahlāda was Virocana who had from his spouse Devī, a son called Bali.

17. From Bali, a hundred sons out of whom Bāṇa was the eldest, were born to (Bali's queen) Aśanā. We shall recount later on (in Skandha VIII) the glory of Bali which deserves celebration.

18. Having propitiated god Śiva, Bāṇa attained the first place among his attendants. The glorious god Śiva is by his side and He is still guarding his capital city.

19. Diti had sons called Maruts. They were fortynine in number. All of them were childless and they were brought over by Indra and were converted to his own class of gods.

The King (Parīkṣit) said :

20. Oh Preceptor, how did Indra convert their inborn demonic nature to godhood ? What obligations did they render to Indra which made him convert them into gods.

21. Oh worshipful sage, these other sages along with me, earnestly desire to know the details. You should therefore expound that to us.

Sūta said :

22. Oh Śaunaka, having heard that speech of Viṣṇurāta (king Parīkṣit), Śuka, the son of sage Bāḍarāyaṇa (Vyāsa), greeted it with heart full of joy, as it was full of earnestness and was brief yet pregnant with significance. The Omniscient Śuka spoke as follows :

Śrī Śuka said :

23. Diti whose sons were slain by Viṣṇu as the ally of Indra, in the background, was burning with wrath enkindled by grief and she began to ponder.

24. "When can I get happy sleep after bringing about the death of the hard-hearted wicked sensual Indra, the cruel murderer of his brothers.

25. The body which is addressed as "A Lord or a Ruler", goes also under the name of worms (becomes full of worms after burial), excrement (if the body is eaten up by carnivorous animals or birds of prey), and ashes (if it is cremated). He (Indra) who seeks to injure other beings for such a body, does not know self-interest, for it leads to hell.

26. By what means can I get a son who will quell the pride of Indra who wrongly presumes that this body is eternal and who is very arrogant (of unrestrained heart) ?"

27-28. With this object in view, she many times served what was wished by her husband. By her service, affection, modesty, self-control, intense devotion, by her charming sweet words as well as by her winning smiles and side glances, she who was intimate with the knowledge of human nature, captivated his heart.

29. Thus enchanted by the sly, clever woman, Kaśyapa, though learned, became powerless (against her charms). He

succumbed to her and acquiesced in her request. Such stupefaction by women is not to be wondered at.

30. At the beginning of creation, Prajāpati found that beings entertained no attachment (and the work of creation was not possible), god Brahmā (then) converted half of his body into a woman who leads astray the judgments of men.

31. The worshipful Kaśyapa who was thus waited upon by his wife, was highly pleased with Diti. With a hearty laugh, he greeted Diti with delight (and said).

Kaśyapa said:

32. Ask for a boon Oh beautiful lady with shapely thighs. Oh faultless one, I am pleased with you. When husband is pleased with his wife, what object in this or in the next world, is unattainable?

33-34. It has been declared that the husband alone is the supreme deity in the case of women.

For the glorious Lord Vāsudeva, the husband of the goddess Śrī, who is in the heart of all beings, is worshipped in the guise of different deities by men who ascribe to him different names (e. g. Indra, Varuṇa) and forms (wielder of the Vajra, or of a noose). But he is worshipped by women in the form of their husbands.

35. Therefore, Oh lady of beautiful waist, chaste women who are desirous of their welfare, worship with unswerving devotion their husband as the image of god and the Soul of the world.

36. I who am worshipped by you with so much devotion and with such superb faith, shall accomplish for you your desired object, Oh blessed lady—an object which is very difficult to be atained by unchaste women.

Diti said:

37. "Oh Brāhmaṇa sage, if you are conferring a boon on me, I pray for an immortal son who will slay Indra, for he (Indra) caused both of my sons killed and I have become a lady whose sons are dead."

38. Hearing her speech, the Brāhmaṇa became dispirit-

ed and repented (as follows) : "Alas! What a great unrighteousness and sin have overtaken me today!

39. Alas! Today I have fallen a victim to sense gratification. I allowed my heart to be captivated by Māyā (deluding power) in the form of a woman. Vile as I am, I shall certainly fall in the abysmal hell.

40. What fault is there in the case of the woman who followed the natural tendencies of women ? Alas ! Fie upon me who am ignorant about my self-interest and lost the control of my senses.

41. Who can fathom the motives of the actions of women whose countenance is beautiful like the fully bloomed autumnal lotus, whose speech is like ambrosia to the ear but whose heart is sharp like a razor-blade.

42. Women whose minds are determined to achieve their own objective have no one really dear. For serving their own purpose, they will kill or cause to be killed their husband, son or brother.

43. I have promised that I shall give her a son. That promise should not prove untrue. But Indra does not deserve death. Under these circumstances the following expedient appears proper.

44. Oh descendant of the Kurus! Considering thus, the worshipful son of Marīci (Kaśyapa) showed some indignation and condemning himself said.

Kaśyapa said:

45. Oh blessed lady, if you carefully observe this vow for one complete year, a son will be born to you who will be the slayer of Indra, or a friend of gods (if this vow is not properly observed).

Diti said:

46. Oh Brāhmaṇa sage! I hereby undertake to observe the vow. Explain to me what acts are obligatory and what are prohibited for me, and also the acts which (are neither obligatory nor prohibitive but which) do not violate the vow.

Kaśyapa said:

47. You should not injure any of the living beings. You should not curse or tell a lie. You should not pare your nails or cut your hair. You should not touch an impure and inauspicious thing.

48. You should not take bath into water by plunging in it. You should not get angry or speak with wicked men. You should not put on unwashed garments nor should wear a garland worn by others.

49. You should not eat food which has remained after being eaten by others; nor food offered to the goddess Bhadrakālī or to seven Mātṛkās or eaten by ants. You should not eat nonvegetarian food or food brought by a Śūdra. You should not take food which is seen by a woman in monthly course. You should not drink water with your folded palms.

50. You must not go out with remnants of food sticking in the mouth or without rinsing the mouth with water. You should not stir out in the evening with dishevelled hair, unadorned or without the upper garment. You should not be unrestrained in speech.

51. You should not sleep without washing your feet or in an impure condition or with wet feet. (You should not go to bed) with your head to the North or to the West. You should not sleep with others or without any clothes. You should not remain asleep at dawn and dusk.

52. Putting on washed garments, always pure and furnished with all auspicious things, you should worship god Viṣṇu, goddess Śrī, cows and Brāhmaṇas before you take breakfast in the morning.

53. You should worship women whose husbands are alive, by offering them garlands, sandal-paste, food and ornaments. Having worshipped your husband, you should wait upon him and contemplate that your husband's energy is present in your womb.

54. If you will observe this vow called Puṁsavana (yielder of a son) for the period of one year without any flaw, you will beget a son who will be the slayer of Indra.

55. Diti agreed to that. She conceived from Kaśyapa and strictly (began to) observe the vow, Oh king.

56. Having come to know the intention of his maternal aunt the sly foresighted Indra waited upon Diti who was staying in a hermitage, (under the pretext of) rendering service to her.

57. At the appointed time he always brought flowers, fruits, sacred sticks, kuśagrass, leaves, shoots, earth and water from the forest.

58. Oh King, in this way the crooked Indra, desiring to find out some flaw in the course of the observance of vows of the lady who had undertaken them, served her like a hunter who puts on the guise of a deer.

59. Indra who was intent on detecting a weak point in her observance of vows, could not find it. He became intensely anxious as to how he could succeed (in securing his good).

60. Once in the evening, Diti who was fatigued with the observance of that austere vow and deluded by fate, slept with the remnants of food in the mouth (without rinsing her mouth with water), and with unwashed feet.

61. Getting this opportunity, Indra who was expert in Yoga entered the womb of Diti by his deluding power of Yoga, while Diti was unconscious in sleep.

62. With his Vajra he cut in seven parts the foetus which was brilliant like gold. While it was crying he said 'Don't cry," and cut each of that piece into seven again.

63. While they were being rent, all of them folded their palms and appealed to him "Oh Indra, we are Maruts, your brothers. Why do you wish to kill us ?"

64. "Don't be afraid, Brothers, you are for me", said Indra to the Maruts who as a class had unswerving loyalty to him as his attendants.

65. The foetus in the womb of Diti did not die through the grace of Lord Viṣṇu even though it was repeatedly hacked with Vajra," just as you were saved from the missile of Aśvatthāman.

66. If a person worships but once the Ancient Person Viṣṇu, he attains to the self-same form as that of Viṣṇu, whereas the great god Hari was worshipped by Diti for a period slightly less than one year.

67. Along with Indra the Maruts became in all fifty gods. Removing the stigma of maternal heredity, they were made participants in Soma-drinking by Indra.

68. After getting up, Diti saw her sons brilliant like fire in the company of Indra. The faultless lady felt highly gratified.

69. She asked Indra, "Child, desiring a son which would strike terror in the sons of Aditi, I observed this vow which was most difficult.

70. I expected to have one son. How is it that I got seven times seven (fortynine)? Oh Son, if the truth is known to you, please tell me, but don't tell a lie."

Indra said:

71. Oh mother, having learnt about your determination, I approached you. Detecting a flaw in the observance of your vow, I who did not care for righteousness and was bent on achieving my object, slashed the foetus.

72. I hacked the foetus in seven ways and there were seven sons. Each of them was cut in seven; but they did not die.

73. Having seen that greatest miracle, I came to the conclusion that this must be some indescribable incidental Siddhi achieved through the worship of Lord Viṣṇu.

74. Those who without entertaining any blessings propitiate the Lord, do not wish the attainment of even Mokṣa, are declared as clever in accomplishing their objects.

75. After propitiating the Ruler of the World who is one's own Soul and is a bestower of his own Self, what wise man would seek contact with *guṇas* (worldly objects)? For (the products) the *guṇas* are available even in hell.

76. Therefore, Oh Mother, it behoves you to forgive this act of wickedness on my part which I, as a fool, committed to the worshipful ones. Fortunately the foetus has become alive again (after death).

Śrī Śuka said:

77. Indra, the god of heaven, was permitted (to go) by her who was sincerely pleased with him. He, along with Maruts, bowed to her and went to the heaven.

78. In this way, I have narrated to you in details what you had asked me, namely, the auspicious birth of the Maruts. Now tell me what else I should relate to you.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

(*The Details of the Vow called Puṁsavana*)

The King (Parikṣīt) asked :

1. I wish to know, Oh Brāhmaṇa Sage, the details of the vow called *Puṁsavana* which you have mentioned, as Lord Viṣṇu is propitiated thereby.

Śrī Śuka said :

2. With the permission and consent of her husband a woman should begin on the 1st day of the bright half of Mārgaśīrṣa this observance of vow which is calculated to confer all desires on one.

3. She should listen to the narrative about the birth of Maruts and consult the Brāhmaṇas. Cleansing her teeth white and having taken a bath, she should put on two white garments. Adorning herself with ornaments, she should worship Lord Viṣṇu along with Śrī in the morning, before taking the breakfast.

4. (She should pray as follows:) "Oh Lord of accomplished desires, I bow to you who, being endowed with enough of all things, are (hence) above wants and expectations. Salutations to you, the Lord of Lakṣmī, the master of all mystic powers.

5. Oh Lord ! Possessor of excellences like supreme grace, fortune, prowess, glory, energy and other divine attributes as you are, you are the real omnipotent Supreme Ruler of the world.

6. Oh Divine consort of Viṣṇu, the supreme deluding power of the Lord, you possess the same characteristics as those of the Supreme Person Viṣṇu. Be propitious unto me, Oh Almighty Goddess. Oh Mother of the universe, I bow to you.

7. I offer worship to the glorious Lord designated by the sacred syllable OM, the Lord who is the Supreme Person, most mighty, the Lord of Mahālakṣmī, along with his highest potencies.

Invoking daily god Viṣṇu by chanting the aforesaid *mantra*, one should offer, with concentrated mind, articles of worship such as water for washing his (Viṣṇu's) hands and feet, and rinse his (Viṣṇu's) mouth and water for taking bath, silken garments, the sacred thread, ornaments, sandal-paste, flowers, incense, light, food and other articles.

8. Out of the food left after offering it to Viṣṇu, twelve oblations of that food should be offered to the fire with the *mantra* "Salutation to the glorious Supreme Person (Viṣṇu) of unlimited powers and denoted by the sacred syllable OM. I offer these oblations to you along with Lakṣmī."

9. If one is desirous of securing all worldly prosperity, one should always devoutly worship goddess Lakṣmi and Lord Viṣṇu who confer boons and both of whom are the fountain-heads of all blessings.

10. She should prostrate herself before them just like a rod on the ground, with her heart submissive in devotion. She should repeat the (abovementioned) *mantra* for ten times and sing (the following) Hymn:

11. "Both of you are the Lords of the universe, the ultimate cause of the world. This is verily the subtle Prakṛti, your deluding potency (Māyā) too formidable to be overcome.

12. You are directly her Supreme Ruler, the Supreme Person. You are the embodiment of all sacrifices while she is the sacrificial performance. She is activity itself while you are the enjoyer of the fruit thereof.

13. This goddess is the manifestation of *guṇas*, while you are the cause of that manifestation and the enjoyer of the *guṇas*. You are the Soul, the inner controller of all embodied beings, while Śrī is the body, senses and the inner organ. The glorious Lakṣmī represents the name and form, while you are their support and their illuminator.

14. Inasmuch as both of you Supreme Rulers confer boons on the three worlds, Oh Lord of hallowing renown, may my great desires be fulfilled."

15. Eulogizing thus the Lord of Śrī along with Śrī who confers boons, one should remove all articles used in worship. Having offered water to rinse the mouth (to the deities), one should continue to worship. (known as *uttara-pūjā*)

16. She should then praise with the above hymn, with her mind merged in devotion, Smelling the remnants of the offerings to fire, she should again worship Hari.

17. Identifying with great devotion her husband with Lord Viṣṇu, she should serve him with various objects dear to him. The husband who is loving by nature, should himself help in all the activities of his wife, whether they be great or small, pertaining to the worship of God.

18. It is enough if this vow is observed by one of the couple (husband and wife). If the wife is incapable (for reasons of health) or disqualified (due to monthly course), the husband should observe it with concentrated mind.

19. This vow pertaining to Viṣṇu, if once undertaken, should not be violated under any circumstances. Every day she should worship with devotion Brāhmaṇas and women whose husbands are alive, by offering them wreaths of flowers. sandal-paste, food and ornaments, and should also worship Lord Viṣṇu.

20. After requesting the deity to retire to his abode, one should eat what was offered to the deity, for self-purification and attainment of all desires.

21. After performing such process of worship for a period of twelve months, the pious lady should observe fast on the last day of the month of Kārttika.

22. When the morrow dawns, she should touch water (take bath) and duly worship Lord Kṛṣṇa as before. The husband should offer twelve oblations according to *pārvaṇa-sthālī-pāka vidhāna* (a kind of sacrificial performance) of rice cooked in milk and mixed with ghee, (in the sacrificial fire).*

23. Having reverentially accepted the blessings pronounced by the Brāhmaṇas who are pleased, and having devoutly

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* The text of the Bh.P. used by VR. adds :

"Looking upon Brāhmaṇas as the embodiments or forms of the Supreme Soul, she should serve meals to them with devotion and should give to them sesamum seeds coated with jaggery and fried grains, and drinking vessels full of water."

paid obeisance to them by bowing the head, she should take meals with their permission.

24. After feeding the preceptor first along with the relatives, the husband, with his speech restrained, should give the remnants of the *caru*, which is capable of conferring good progeny and ensuring good fortune, to his wife.

25 A man who observes this vow of the Almighty God with due formalities, gets his desired object. A woman who observes this will get good fortune, wealth, progeny, longevity to her husband (throughout her life), glory and a good house.

26-27. An unmarried girl will get a husband possessing all good characteristics. A widow will be rid of her sins and attain to Liberation. A woman who loses her children in death) will get long-lived children. A woman if ill-fated in spite of wealthy condition, becomes blessed with good fortune and if ugly looking, becomes beautiful. A chronic patient of long period gets free from disease, and becomes energetic and virile in his senses and activities. If it is repeated at the time of auspicious ceremonies, it gives eternal and infinite satisfaction to forefathers and divinities.

28. If the Fire-God, the goddess Lakṣmī and Lord Viṣṇu are pleased after the completion of *Homa* (sacrifice), they confer all desired objects. Oh King, I have narrated to you the auspicious story of the birth of Maruts and the great vow observed by Diti.

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