

CHAPTER-III

Summary of Contents

The Mahābhāgavata-Purāṇa must be distinguished from the famous Vaiṣṇava Mahāpurāṇa called Bhāgavata. It is an interesting upapurāṇa dealing with the Praise of Devī and Her worship. Although it is a comparatively late work, and is not mentioned in any of the Purāṇas and Upapurāṇas except the Bṛhaddharma purāṇa, it deserves to be studied for information about the contemporary state of Hindu religion and society in Bengal, especially in its eastern part which was adjacent to Kāmarūpa.

Adhyaya-1

The printed edition of the Mahābhāgavata-purāṇa opens with four maṅgala Ślokaś, of which the third contains a Salutation to Devī and the fourth a benediction. In these two verses Devī is spoken of as the : 'Ādyā Prakṛti', and as 'Parā' and 'Svargāpavarga-Pradā'. She created the Universe in accordance with Her own free will and after subjecting Herself to births, obtained Lord Śambhu as Her husband, Who had obtained Her, as His wife, as a result of severe austerities.

This Purāṇa is narrated as a dialogue, between the interlocutors Lord Maheśā and Nārada, Sage Vyāsa and Jaimini and Sūta and Śeunaka. It was narrated at the request of

Śaunaka by Sūta in the Naimiṣa forest.

As said by Sūta, Sage Vyāsa could not attain mental satisfaction, even after writing, 'The eighteen Purāṇas' and hence he wanted to write a Mahāpurāṇa, which would deal elaborately with the praise of Bhagavatī. Consequently, he went to the Himalayas, for realising the true nature of Devī, by means of austerities. But being directed by Devī's Voice from the air, Vyāsa went over to Brahmaloḥa where he was told by the four Vedas that it was Bhagavatī Durgā Herself who was, 'Parama-Brahma'. Being eulogized by these Vedas the Devī appeared in person before Vyāsa. In order to convince Vyāsa of Her own identity with Supreme Brahman, Devī assumed various forms, such as those of a thousand - handed female deity mounted on a lion, and furnished with divine weapons, a dark-complexioned and four-handed goddess, standing on a corpse, (Śava-Vāhanā), female deities having two, four, ten, eighteen, one hundred or innumerable hands, Viṣṇu and Kamalā, Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā, Brāhmā and Vāṇī, Śiva and Gaurī, and so on. The goddess then revealed to Vyāsa, the Purāṇa named Mahābhāgavata, which Vyāsa found recorded on the thousand petals of the lotus lying under Her feet. Thus, Sūta said, the Mahābhāgavata was revealed to Vyāsa.

In the remaining chapters Sūta is found to reproduce the dialogue between Mahādeva and Nārada on the glory of Durgā in the same way as it was reported by Vyāsa to Jaimini.

Adhyaya - 2

Being requested by Jaimini to speak on the glory of Durgā, Vyāsa praises the greatness and exploits of Durgā and asserts that the goddess Durgā is Herself 'Tāraka Brahman'. He then begins to reproduce what Mahādeva, being insisted upon to divulge the name of the deity worshipped by Himself and by Brāhmā and Viṣṇu, said to Nārada on the Mandara mountain about the glory of Durgā.

Adhyaya - 3

Goddess Maheśvarī is the dispenser of the Creation, preservation, and destruction of Crores of insects residing in the different worlds. She is the Citi Śakti i.e. the power of sentiency pervading all living beings. She is formless and still assumes a body on account of Her sport. Then there is the description of the origin of the Universe, as well as of Brāhmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva, Gaṅgā, Durgā, Sāvitrī, Lakṣmī, and Sarasvatī from Para Prakṛti. Though formless Para Prakṛti assumes at Her own sweet will the form of a naked (digamberā) female having a Collyrium - dark Complexion, beautiful face, four hands, red eyes, dishevelled hair, heavy breasts, and a lion as Her mount. Prakṛti's assumption of a dreadful form for testing the force of penance of Brāhmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. Her failure to disturb Śiva's mind and Her consequent consent to become His wife in Her fullness. Brāhmā's creation of His ten mind-born sons, of Dakṣa and other preajāpatiḥ and of

Sanīdhyā and Kāma. Birth of Svāyambhuva Manu and Śatarūpā from Brahmā's body. Descendants of Svāyambhuva Manu and Dakṣa.

Adhyaya - 4

At the behest of Lord Brahmā, Dakṣa practised penance for three thousand divine years and propitiated the goddess parā prakṛti, who appeared before him, assuming a terrific form. She promised Dakṣa that she would be born as his daughter and would be having a beautiful golden hue form. In accordance with Her boon a goddess was born as a daughter to prasūti the wife of Dakṣa, on an auspicious day. She was white complexioned and Her eyes were long resembling a full blown blue lotus. She had eight arms. After she attained marriageable age Dakṣa arranged for Her Svayamvara in which he did not invite Lord Śiva. But Satī laid the garland on the ground uttering 'Śivāyanamaḥ'. Thereafter Dakṣa performed the marriage ceremony of Satī and Śiva. However the Patriarch Dakṣa had a decrease in his admiration for Satī as She had selected Lord Śiva as Her husband. Consequently Dakṣa lost his balance of mind and blamed Satī. His divine knowledge disappeared after the departure of Satī for the Himāleayas.

Adhysya - 5

Sage Dadhīci tried to convince Dakṣa regarding the greatness of Lord Śiva and goddess Satī. He stressed that Lord Śiva was the highest deity and that His world was superior even to Vaikuṇṭha and Brahmāloka also. According to him all the beautiful ladies and handsome young men that are found on the earth, in the waters, in the sky and in the nether world have shared their beautiful forms from Satī and Śiva. Dakṣa admitted that inspite of his listening to the greatness of Śiva and Satī there was no rise of conviction in him regarding the supremacy of Lord Śiva. As Dakṣa was ordered by Brahmā to keep the Rudras under control, he considered himself to be their superior. Sage Dadhīci surmised that Dakṣa had no devotion for Śiva and Satī and hence he went away to his abode in disappointment.

Adhyaya - 6

After their marriage, Śiva and Satī stayed on the peak of Himalayas, where Menā the wife of himalayas worshipped Satī in order to obtain Her as her daughter.

Once upon a time Nandī, a servant of Dakṣa and a student of sage Dadhīci approached Satī and Śiva and eulogized both of them. In his eulogy, Nandī stated that Lord Śiva was the highest Puruṣa, the greater, the Sustainer, and the destroyer of all the worlds. He was the overlord of every one and every thing in the world and was Brahman Itself.

His form was unthinkable. His worshippers obtain His position and rejoice in heaven constantly. Mandī prayed to Lord Śiva to accept him as His attendant and to keep him in His proximity. His Prayer was granted by the Lord.

Lord Śiva Ordained that those who eulogized Him by that eulogy, would have nothing inauspicious in the three worlds and that they would attain Salvation at the end after leading a long life in the mortal world.

He also appointed Mandī as the leader of the Premethas (the retinue) of Lord Śiva.

Adhyaya - 7

After the departure of Śiva's retinue both Lord Śiva and Satī indulged in dalliance for ~~then~~ thousand years. Thus Satī, the fascinator (Mohinī) of the three worlds, enamoured Mahādeva, by Her super-human power. Menakā observed a vow on Mehāṣṭamī for one year, in order to obtain Satī as her daughter. Thereupon Satī promised her to be born as her daughter.

Prājāpati Dakṣa censured Lord Śiva daily. Lord Śiva also did not consider him to be worthy of respect. Thus a great dislike was generated between the two.

On Nārada's advice to find out a remedy to protect his city from the wrath of Śiva and His hosts, Dakṣa arranged to perform a Sacrifice, in which he invited all the gods except Śiva and Satī. Even though Dadhīci advised Dakṣa to invite Śadāśiva insisting upon the fact that it would never be fruitful without Him still he disregarded his advice. He also stressed that there was no difference at all between Lord Śiva and Lord Nārāyaṇa. After a hot exchange of words with Dakṣa, Dadhīci left the Sacrificial ground along with some other sages.

Nārada went to Kaiṭāsa and tried to persuade Lord Śiva and Satī to participate in the sacrifice of Dakṣa in order to accept His share or to create obstruction in it. On Śiva's rejecting to go there Nārada persuaded Satī to go to destroy Dakṣa's pride.

Adhyaya - 8

On Nārada's suggestion Satī insisted upon Śiva's going to the sacrifice of patriarch Dakṣa in Her company expecting Dakṣa to honour Lord Śiva. But Śiva drew Her attention to the fact that He was not invited by Dakṣa deliberately. Then Satī repeatedly requested Him to allow Her to go to Dakṣa's Sacrifice. With a view to secure a share for Śiva in Dakṣa's Sacrifice. As Satī could not be dissuaded from Her intention to go, Lord Śiva asked Her to do as she liked without Caring for His permission. On hearing

Śiva's slighting remark, Satī became angry and assumed a terrific form. Hence Śiva ran away in fear. In order to mitigate His fear Satī stood in front of Him in all the ten directions, Shaking off Her ten other forms. But Śiva's fear was not removed. He inquired about Satī, His wife. To that Satī replied by narrating the names of the goddesses present there, called Daśa Mahāvidyās. Satī ordained that Śiva would proclaim the works dealing with the worship of ten Mahāvidyās which would be known as Āgamaśāstra. According to Her Veda and Āgama were Her two arms by means of which this whole moveable as well as immoveable world is supported.

The goddess assumed a terrific form and started in a chariot to which ten thousand lions were Yoked. The ill omens were noticed at the departure of Sati.

Adhyaya - 9

Prasūti the wife of Dakṣa, gave a warm welcome to Satī at Dakṣa's house, insisting upon Her greatness as the first and foremost power of the three worlds. Prasūti also Censured the perverse intellect of Dakṣa, who always envied Lord Śiva and did not invite Him to the Sacrifice, eventhough he was persuaded by her as well as the seges. Prasūti narated to Satī, a very terrific dream, dreamt by her, the previous night, in which she saw a black goddess with dishevelled hair and with directions for Her attire, coming to the sacrifice of Dakṣa. On inquiry of Dakṣa she replied that

she was his daughter, whereupon Dakṣa censured Lord Śiva. On hearing it she got enraged and entered the Sacrificial fire, whereupon the hosts of pramathas attacked the gods and destroyed the sacrifice. They cut off the head of Dakṣa and sucked his blood. On Brahmā's request Lord Śiva came to the sacrifice and brought back Dakṣa to life again with his head substituted by that of a goat. Prasūti added that Satī was then actually seen by her as she was seen formerly in her dream.

The citizens of Dakṣa were astonished to find extreme change of colour of Satī from Shining golden hue to dark black. They suspected that she had determined to give Dakṣa the fruit of Her disregard. Dakṣa lamented the miserable lot of his daughter, as a result of attaining unfit husband and added that she was as much dear to him as his own vital airs. On hearing the slander of Śiva, from Dakṣa Satī created a Chāyā-Satī resembling Her form and ordered Her to destroy the sacrifice by entering into the sacrificial fire. Chāyā-Satī praised Lord Śiva and insisted upon His virtues again and again in front of Dakṣa who angrily ordered Her to get away from his eye-sight. The enraged goddess replied Dakṣa that not only she would be out of his sight but would be out of the body, born from him soon. Thereafter Chāyā-Satī entered the sacrificial fire. Illomens appeared at that time. Nārada approached Śiva on Kaiāṣa and reported to Him about the event.

Adhyaye - 10

Nāreḍa further reported to Śiva, that even after Satī's abandoning Her body, Dakṣa continued his sacrifice and the gods accepted the oblations. Śiva's piteous lamentations follow. Thereafter Śiva's eyes and face became red with anger. As a result the universe, was perturbed, the creatures were terrified and the earth-quake took place repeatedly. From the fire from the third eye of Śiva, a gigantic puruṣa came out and requested Śiva to order him to do His bidding. Lord Śiva named him as Vīrabhadra and made him the head of the Prēmāthas and ordered him to destroy the sacrifice of Dakṣa and to subdue the gods there, and to behead Dakṣa. From the sighs of Lord Śiva arose the gaṇas of Śiva expert in war-fare who along with Vīrabhadra destroyed the sacrifice. They tied with ropes Yama, Kairṛta, and Varuṇa. Lord Indra assumed the form of a peacock and flew to the mountain and observed the incidents.

A voice from the air reminded Vīrabhadra that he had forgotten his ownself on account of wrath and insisted upon the non-difference between Viṣṇu and Mahādeva. Lord Brahmā saw Mahādeva on Kailaṣa and consoled Him insisting upon the fact that Satī was Brahman itself and so it was wrong to think that She assumed a body. Brahmā disclosed to Śiva that the Mahāmāya immanent in the world established Chāyā-Satī near the altar of the sacrifice for the sake of deluding Dakṣa. On Brahmā's request Śiva came to the sacrificial

ground and ordered Virabhadra to enliven Dakṣa. Virabhadra attached the head of a goat to the body of Dakṣa and enlivened him. Thereafter Dakṣa completed the sacrifice after giving the oblation to Mahēśa.

On the advice of Lords Brahmā and Viṣṇu, Dakṣa worshipped Śiva by different eulogies respectfully. Dakṣa worshipped Lord Śiva by his body speech and mind filled with devotion. Thereafter Brahmā ordained that in case the gods would go in a sacrifice leaving Śiva then they would meet with the same fate immediately.

Adhyaya - 11

Lords Brahmā and Viṣṇu tried to console Lord Śiva afflicted by separation from Satī. They stressed that the goddess was of the nature of pūrṇa Brahman and was eternal, hence the abandonment of Her body was merely a delusion and not reality. The goddess maintains relation with one who is performing his duty. The three great gods come next to Her in rank and yet Lord Śiva is the nearest and dearest to Her.

Brahmā and Viṣṇu explained to Śiva that it was not Satī who had entered fire, but Chāyā-Satī created by the goddess had entered it. She tried eulogized the goddess who appeared in the sky and assured Śiva that she would be born again as the daughter of Himālayas and become His wife. She

told Śiva from sky that His heart was Her highest resort, and advised Him to bear the body of Chāyā²Śatī, On His head and to roam about on earth to cause Mahēpīṭhas to be created by the fall of Her limbs. She also advised Lord Śiva to practise austerities at that best pīṭha which would contain Her organ of generation. The limbs of the Chāyā²Śatī which fell on the ground turned immediately into stones to facilitate the need to worship Her. At this juncture, Nārada sent by Viṣṇu saw Lord Śiva and advised Him to keep His mind calm. Nārada informed Lord Śiva that Lord Viṣṇu had cut to pieces the body of Chāyā²Śatī in order to pacify Śiva. This act of Viṣṇu was in keeping with the instructions of the goddess. After having come to know from Nārada, about Viṣṇu's cutting off the limbs of Chāyā²Śatī Śiva Sighed repeatedly and cursed Viṣṇu that He would be born as a human being in the lineage of the Sun in Tretā yuga, and would be enamoured by the super natural power of the goddess who would place Her shadow and then abandon Him. There-after a cruel demon would make Him separate^d from His wife by abducting Her and would make Him drowned in grief, just like Lord Śiva Himself.

Adhaya - 12

Lord Brahmā and Viṣṇu heard about the curse given to Viṣṇu by Śiva from Nārada and went to meet Lord Śiva to Console Him. They stated that Śiva lamented for Śatī in vain as He knew and saw Her as existing.

The trinity met at the Mahāpīṭha in Kāmarūpa. Lord Brahmā and Viṣṇu advised Lord Śiva to practise penance contemplating on the goddess in Kāmarūpa and added that that was a Mahāpīṭha where the goddess was the direct giver of fruit to the aspirants.

Thereafter the trinity practised severe penance in the Mahāpīṭha. The goddess granted a boon to Lord Śiva, promising Him that she would assume two forms, one liquid form called Gaṅgā and another form of pārvatī and would be born as the daughter of Menā and would become His wife. She also gave the desired boons to Lords Brahmā and Viṣṇu. According to the instructions of Lord Mahādeva to Nārada, there are 51 Śakti Pīṭhas which have come into existence by the falling of the various limbs of Chāyā² Satī on the ground. Out of all of them, Kāmarūpa is the best Śakti-Pīṭha. On visiting that Mahāpīṭha and on bathing in the waters of Lohitya, one who has committed Brahmī-cide is also freed from the bondage of birth. The current of Brahmaputra itself is Lord Janārdana Himself in the form of liquid. The order in which the bathing in Brahmaputra, offering libations to the manes with devotion and saluting Kāmeśvarī uttering the sacred formula, should be practised is mentioned.

The listener to the goddess's taking birth as the two daughters of Menakā has his command irrevocable everywhere. All the sins accumulated in other births are destroyed, the enemies are¹ consumed and the lineage increases.

Adhyaya - 13

Lord Mahādeva, narrated to Nārada how Satī bifurcated Herself and became the two daughters of Himavat as Gaṅgā and Gaurī. Gaṅgā who was white complexioned with charming face, three eyes and four hands was born as Menā's daughter on the third day of the bright half of Vaisākha at mid-day. Nārada approached Himavān in order to see his daughter Gaṅgā with all Her beautiful limbs. Nārada disclosed to Himālaya that goddess Satī Who was subtle, Mūla Prakṛti and who had formerly become the daughter of Dakṣa had Herself become his daughter by Her part. On Nārada's advice Lord Brahmā along with other gods approached Himālaya to solicit Gaṅgā by way of alms. Nārada foresaw that Gaṅgā would assume liquid form and would remain on the head of Lord Hara as Chāyā-Satī used to consequently Maheśvara would be pleased. This was a means of winning the favour of Lord Hara.

Gaṅgā appeared in dream before Himālaya and informed him about the activity of the gods, just on the previous night about its fag end. She foretold that the Gods Brahmā etc. would come to him and would request him to allow Gaṅgā to go to Svergepura along with them. She also informed him about Lord Śiva's practising penance in Kāmarūpa in order to obtain Her as His wife. She consoled her father

and advised him not to grieve for Her Sake on account of infatuation at any time. In order that he should not repent she had informed him before-hand.

Lord Brāmā explained to Himālaya that Lord Śambhu's notion of absolute over-Lordship over Satī enraged Her and consequently she abandoned Him and went to the place of Dakṣa. She abandoned Dakṣa also who was always censuring Lord Śiva. Thus she abandoned both of them assuming the form of Chāyā (Shadow) which was the dead form of the goddess, that was eternal, complete, and constituted of Brāhman. On Her disappearance Lord Śiva was stricken with grief and danced on the earth keeping the Chāyā on His head. Consequently the earth began to sink in the Rasātala. On the request of the gods to protect the worlds, Lord Viṣṇu cut off the limbs of Chāyā-Satī by means of His discus.

Lord Brāhmā explained His plan to Himavat to take Gaṅgā to svargapure and to hand over Her to Lord Śiva in marriage in order that Lord Śiva might be pleased with the gods. Himālaya expressed his feeling of unbearable grief as a result of separation from Gaṅgā. Gaṅgā consoled him and assured him that neither she was away from him nor he was away from Her and requested him to hand Her over to Brāhmā.

Adhyaya - 14

Himavān told Menā on her inquiry that Gaṅgā had gone to sverga as a result of Brahmā's request. Menā lamented for her daughter. Himālaya consoled her informing her about all that was spoken by Gaṅgā. Enraged Menā cursed Gaṅgā that since she had gone to Triviṣṭap without taking leave of her mother, therefore she should again come to the surface of the earth transformed in the form of liquid. At the behest of Brahmā, Nārada went to Kāmarūpa to bring Lord Śiva to Svergpura and informed Him that His Setī was reborn and desired Him as Her husband. Nārada also conveyed to Śiva, Brahmā's intention to hand over Gaṅgā to Him as his wife. After their marriage they returned to Māyāpura on Kaiāsa where Gaṅgā transformed Herself into liquid form.

Adhyaya - 15

As a result of the austerities of Himālaya and Menā and also as a result of the request of Lord Maheśa, the goddess who was of the nature of Pūrṇa Brahman was born as Menakā's daughter possessing a divine form with three large eyes, eight hands and with a crescent as Her crown. On the request of Himālaya, the goddess explained to him, Her real nature and bestowed on him a divine eye in order to enable him to see Her sovereign form. Thereafter she showed him Her three special forms viz. Her Maheśvarī, Brahmāṇi, and Vaiṣṇavī forms. Thereafter Himālaya eulogized the goddess referring to Her various general forms and also to the Vedantic

concept of Her nature. The goddess stressed the importance of the performance of disinterested action leading to Purification of mind, and consequently to Ātama-Jñāna and Salvation as also that of unflinching devotion to Her. Lastly the nature of Salvation is made clear, which is the direct experience of the self.

Adhyaya - 16

By way of reply to Himālaya's query the goddess explained to him the nature of the individual self and the nature of the lore which leads to emancipation. She also pointed out that the real cause of transmigratory existence is the consideration of non-self as the self which produces defective action and leads to transmigratory existence. The sure means to get rid of transmigratory existence is to abandon likes and dislikes producing inauspicious unseñ. As the individual self is pure, self-sufficient and of the nature of existence, intelligence, and bliss is unborn and undying and is unsullied, therefore it is not the sufferer of pain. However it hankers after happiness only through the supernatural power (Māyā) of the goddess which is beginningless nescience which deludes the world. The embodied self is connected with the Māyā as soon as he is born. He attains the mind which is characteristic of itself and in which desires abide resulting in his transmigratory existence. The embodied self, the intellect, the mind, egoism, etc. are the

real enjoyers of all sorts of pleasurable or painful sense objects. The agony of the mind has its root in the body.

Adhyaya - 17

From the end of all miseries on separation from the body, on the part of the embodied self, Himālaya inferred that the body is the cause of miseries. Hence he inquired of the goddess as to how that body comes into existence. As also how the self attains heaven. By way of reply the goddess explained to him the four classes of born creatures. She also taught him the way in which the embodied self accompanied by a digit of the mist enters the Vrīhi (Rice Seed), and is turned into Semen Virile after being eaten up. Then she throws light on conceiving of women and on scientific knowledge of embryology. Thereafter the suffering and terrible torture of the embodied self in the embryo are described. The mental agony of the embodied self for losing the chance to put an end to Samsāra in the previous birth by worshipping the goddess is described. He fails to realize the difference between the body and the spirit, as also the unreal character of all sorts of happiness resulting from sense objects.

Adhyaya - 18

By way of reply to Himālaya's inquiry the goddess informed him about Her digitless, subtle, attributeless form which is absolute and beyond speech and which should be meditated upon by aspirant desiring release. Thereafter she

informed him about Her Vibhūties (forms of splendour). The non-dual state of Śiva and Śakti was also conveyed to him. She advised him to know Her gross forms first and then try to understand Her Subtle form. By remembering Her without distraction of the mind incessantly one gets release. He who breathes his last remembering Her, is freed from Saṁsāra. By dedicating every thing that one does to the goddess one is freed from the bondage of actions.

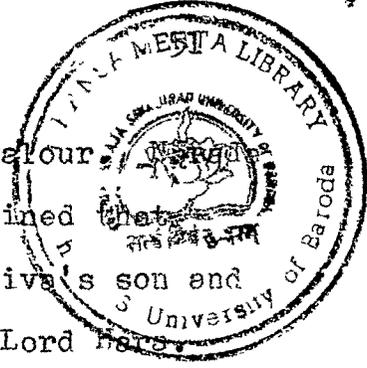
Adhyaya - 19

On hearing the teaching of Yoga-Sāra from the goddess Pārvatī, the king of mountains became freed while still alive. Then follows the fruit of hearing the Bhagavatīgītā. The merit of the recitation of this Gītā is unique.

Adhyaya - 20

Once upon a time, Sage Māreḍa came down from the sky to see the goddess Maheśvarī sitting in the lap of Himālaya. The sage foretold Himālaya that his daughter would become a beloved wife of Lord Śambhu, snatching away the half of His body, on account of love. The Sage advised him to give away his daughter to Lord Maheś as she was the daughter of Dakṣa and a former wife of Lord Śiva. Their conjugal love would be unique. Accompanied by Her Lord Śiva, would perform many deeds of the gods. She would give birth

to a son, endowed with great strength and valour informed Himālaya that Lord Bṛahmā had ordained that Tārākāsura would die at the hands of Lord Śiva's son and that goddess alone would be able to delude Lord



Adhyaya - 21

Once upon a time the Gandharvas and Kinnaras informed Himālaya about Lord Śiva's practising penance on its peak and about the premathas attending upon Him. On hearing their words, Himālaya approached Lord Śiva and adored Him with devotion. Śiva asked him to prevent all and sundry from approaching Him. Even though Pārvatī had attained marriageable age, still Himālaya did not arrange for Her marriage elsewhere, keeping in mind the words of Nārada.

After sometime, Pārvatī decided to approach Lord Śiva and to delude Him, in order that He might give up yoga and might accept Her as His wife. By so doing she wanted to give effect to Bṛahmā's curse on Śiva who had censured Bṛahmā for his passionate love for his own daughter (Sāṃdhyā). Pārvatī consoled Menā who feared Her going to an isolated place stating that She was Mahā-Kālī and added that she would definitely come back again after deluding Lord Mahādeva. Pārvatī received a second name Umā due to Menā's protest.

Adhyaya - 22

Lord Śiva who was anxious and was meditating upon the goddess who was inside Him did not accept Mahēśvarī as His wife at once. On account of Brahmā's boon the demon Tāreka conquered all gods and deprived them of their kingdom and polluted their wives. Brahmā advised the gods on their request to manage in such a way that Lord Śiva might give up penance and might get married. Only Śiva's son was destined to be a slayer of Tāreka. On the advice of Brhaspati, Indra sent cupid to delude Lord Śiva and to arouse passion in Him. The attack of cupid on Lord Śiva frustrated. On its failure the goddess Mahēśvarī smiled and stood in front of Rudra, along with Her friends. At that time Lord Mahādeva gave up meditation and after opening His beautiful eyes stared at Pārvatī. Cupid discharged his arrow towards the heart of Lord Mahēśa at that time. Lord Mahēśa was deluded by that arrow and desired sexual intercourse. After bringing the sense organs under control and finding out that Cupid had tried to surpass Him, He became red with anger. Fire came out from the third eye of Rudra and burnt cupid to ashes.

Adhyaya - 23

The fire from the third eye of Lord Hara, could not return to Him and assumed the form of a mare placed by Brahmā in the waters of the ocean. The gods consoled Rati - assuring Her that Her husband would again be alive. The goddess Pārvatī smiled and inquired of Lord Mahēśa as regards

the purposelessness of cupid's assassination. On hearing Her words Lord Śiva understood Her to be the primordial nature incarnate. He considered Himself to be blessed to find Her in front of Him, who was beloved to Him like Satī. She appreciated His feeling for Her and assured Him that she was the same Satī who had left Him. Thereupon the goddess assumed Her Kālī form, with a view to cool His heart, burnt on account of Her separation. Lord Mahādeva resorted to highest yoga and lying down bore Her lotus like foot on His heart. By His part He stood in front of Her assuming five faces, and eulogized the goddess with a thousand names. This eulogy is called Lalitā sahasranāma-stotra. Lord Śiva requested the goddess to favour Him by Her own qualities and to place Him in Her. After granting that boon she again became Gaurī as before. Then the hearing of the fruit of reciting the eulogy is mentioned.

Adhyaya - 24

After applying the ashes of the burnt body of Kāmadeva, to all His limbs, Lord Śambhu began to practise penance again on Himālaya meditating upon the goddess. Goddess Pārvatī also practised penance meditating upon Lord Śiva. Their penance lasted for three thousand years. In order to free Himself from the torment caused by the application of cupid's ashes, Lord Śiva approached the goddess and requested Her to engage Him in Her service, to save Him

from lust, as she was the saviour of all from calamities. The goddess smilingly replied that He should obtain Her hand in accordance with the rites from Her father. Lord Śambhu conveyed His intention to marry Pārvatī to Himālaya, through the seven great sages Maricī etc. Himālaya requested Śiva through the seven sages, to let him know about the auspicious time for his daughter's marriage.

Adhyaya - 25

On hearing the message of Himālaya through the seven sages, Lord Śiva requested the sages to find out an auspicious time and to inform Himālaya about it. The sages advised Him to accomplish His marriage on thursday the fifth of the bright half of the month of Vaiśākha. The sages informed Himālaya about the time fixed for the marriage and conveyed his message to Lord Śiva. Lord Śiva sent Nārada on an errand to invite Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Indra etc. to participate in the procession. Lord Śiva took an oath to serve the goddess whole heartedly for all times and not to do anything disagreeable to Her at any time. On hearing the news of Śiva's marriage from Nārada, the king of gods was overjoyed and confided in the approaching death of Tīreka.

Adhyaya - 26

The preliminary ceremonies were performed in the city of the king of mountains to celebrate the marriage ceremony of Pārvatī. Sage Nārada informed Rati about the marriage of Śiva and Pārvatī and advised her to approach and request Indra to persuade Śiva to enliven cupid assuring her about Lord Śiva's granting the request. In keeping with Lord Śiva's command some of the gods who had gathered together at His place played upon the musical instruments, while the gandharvas sang songs, whereas the celestial damsels danced. Even the trees in the forest of Mahādeva were laden with the bunches of full blown beautiful flowers. The male cuckoo emitted sweet note and the bees emitted humming sound. There was a shower of flowers. Thus even nature participated in the rejoicings on the occasion of the marriage ceremony of Lord Śiva and Pārvatī.

Adhyaya - 27

Rati, the paragon of beauty, emaciated on account of the misery of the loss of Her husband came over there with tears in Her eyes and bitterly lodged a complaint against Indra about His neglect to enliven Her husband as promised Her on His death. The gods brought this state of affairs to the notice of Lord Mahādeva, who on hearing their request made Kāma regain a body. On the request of Lord Brahmā to Lord Śiva to assume a handsome form in order to please His parents in Law, Lord Śiva at once appeared in a pleasing form

with one face and two arms. The matted hair on the head transformed into a crown, the fire in the third eye changed into a mark on the forehead, the ashes smeared on the body transformed into sandal paste and the serpent Śeṣa became an ornament of gold.

Adhyaya - 28

On seeing the husband of Pārvatī, having a handsome face with a crown of gold and a crescent on His head and shining like a hundred suns, Menakā and Himālaya were pleased. The gods, gandharvas and Kinneras stared at Lord Śiva. They passed appreciative remark regarding the exquisite beauty of Pārvatī as well as extreme handsomeness of Lord Mahādeva. Thereafter Himālaya devoutly eulogized Lord Śambhu and remarked that his own birth was fruitful, in so far as he saw the master of the world in company of the mother of the world by his own eyes. Lord Śambhu was pleased with His eulogy and greeted Himālaya and disclosed to him that he himself was one of His forms, and gave him a share in the sacrifice thereafter. Himālaya thanked Lord Śiva for granting him the boon and chose another boon requesting Lord Śiva to remain on its peak to sport along with Pārvatī and to purify him. The said boon was also granted by Lord Śiva who got a city constructed there and stayed there along with Umā. The Phalaśruti states that the hearer or reciter of this auspicious festival of Pārvatī's marriage attains the

position of the goddess, is immune from fear arising from enemy or a king and is free from all sorts of sins.

Adhyaya - 29

Lord Śiva engaged His eyes, ears and mind in pleasing Pārvatī and increased Her love for Him. Once upon a time He garlanded Pārvatī and embraced Her and made up His mind to procreate a son. Then Lord Śambhu dallied with Pārvatī for fifteen years deluded by ~~lust~~ and drowned in the bliss of love. With His mind overwhelmed with desire He did not know either day or night. Even while dallying thus His semen virile did not fall down and He could not obtain peace. The earth struck by His stroke of foot and tortured thus assumed the form of a cow and went to the Sun, who took Her to Indra and finally all gods went to Lord Brahmā who consoled them and told them that the dalliance of Lord Mahesvara was for the sake of accomplishing their purpose. He further assured them that a person who would be born from the semen virile dropped off by Lord Śiva would be the slayer ^{of} the demon Tārakā. He further added that if a son were to be born to Lord Śambhu by His wife then He would be the destroyer of the gods and demons. He advised the gods that they should manage in such a way that by Lord Śambhu's semen virile a son should be born not through His wife but elsewhere. They approached Lord Śambhu to request Mahesvarī to desist from dalliance with Lord Śiva. But neither of them desisted from dalliance even on their approaching Him.

Adhyaya - 30

The wonderstruck gods eulogized the mother of the world who was of the nature of bashfulness. They praised Her as the mother of the three worlds including the gods themselves and requested Her to protect the earth and be pleased with them and to give up sexual intercourse. The goddess complied with their request. From Her reproductive energy a great man called Bhairava was born who was made by Her the doorkeeper of Her city. Lord Brahmā knew the intention of Lord Śiva to discharge the semen virile and ordered god Vāyu to carry it to the reproductive organs of the Kṛttikās speedily. Lord Śambhu discharged the semen virile on the head of fire god who threw it on a reed forest nearby. The wind subdivided the half of that semen virile and placed it in the female organ of generation of the six Kṛttikās which mixed up with their blood and went to their stomach. The portion of it which fell into the fire turned into gold. The Kṛttikās unable to bear the portion of that semen virile collected it smeared with blood in a box of wood and threw it into the ganges. Brahmā took away the box, to his own abode. Immediately after the birth of a boy in it, Brahmā came to know about it and broke down the box and saw the boy on the full moon day of the month of Āśvin. Brahmā performed the ceremony of naming the child.

Adhyaya -31

Lord Śiva narrated to Nārada that once upon a time, the gods defeated by Tāraka, went to Lord Brāhmā and requested Him to send the son of Mahādeva immediately for the destruction of Tāraka. On Brāhmā's ordering Him to start, Kārtikeya requested Him to arrange for his vehicle. Thereupon Brāhmā gave him a peacock as a vehicle and a spear adorned with gold and shining like a crore suns for the destruction of Tāraka. Lord Brāhmā appointed Him as the commander in chief of the army of gods. On seeing the commander of the gods, approaching him Tāraka mounted a chariot adorned with pure gold to which lions were yoked and rushed forward. Fearful omens were observed at the time of his starting for the battle.

Adhyaya - 32

Lord Brāhmā mounted a wonderful chariot along with great sages and remained in the sky to see the war. Indra killed the powerful demons by hundreds and thousands in the battle by hurling His thunderbolt. The god Varuṇa also tied the best of demons by His noose and struck them by missiles and killed them. Many other demons were killed by other gods, as a result a river of blood began to flow. Thereafter a duel between the demon Tāraka and the commander in chief of the army of gods is described.

Adhyaya - 33

The fight between Skanda and Tāraka is described. God Indra also fought with Tāraka, but his thunder-bolt could not harm Tāraka. At the end the demon Tāraka fell down on the ground lifeless, struck by the lance of Kārtikeya. The gods were overjoyed and the directions became clear. The sun shone brightly and the world became steady.

Adhyaya - 34

Skanda was honoured and eulogized by gods on his victory over Tāraka. Thereafter Lord Brahmā took Kumāra in an aerial car to Lord Mahesā, and informed Kumāra that Lord Śiva and goddess Pārvatī were his parents. Lord Mahesā celebrated a great festival inviting the gods. Lord Nārāyaṇa who had come there, to see Kārtikeya, desired to become the son of the goddess. With that thought in mind, Lord Viṣṇu prostrated before the goddess, who gave Him a boon to become Her son.

Adhyaya - 35

Once upon a time, Lord Bhava, along with Bhavānī went out for a pleasure trip on the earth keeping their son in the house. They came to a beautiful forest on the earth, where the Lord created a city and lived therein with Umā. Once Mahādeva went out along with pramathas to bring

flowers from the forest, keeping the goddess in the house. He delayed for long. In the meantime, goddess Gaurī smeared Her body with turmeric and became prepared to go to take a bath. Thinking about the protection of the house and remembering the prayer of Viṣṇu, she removed the smearing of turmeric from Her body, and created a son. She assigned him the work of protecting Her city, till Her return. The son of Umā prevented Lord Śiva from entering the city, by lifting up a trident. Not knowing Him to be the son of Umā, Lord Śiva hurled His trident towards Him, which burnt His head. But still He did not give up His vital airs. Meanwhile the goddess came over there. On being asked by Her, Lord Śiva disclosed that He had burnt His head to ashes, not knowing Him to be Her son. On Her insisting upon giving a head to Her son, Mahādeva, searched for someone's head and found an elephant lying on the ground with his head in the northern direction and cut off his head and placed it on the trunk of the boy. On Mahādeva's coming to know that Lord Nārāyaṇa was born as His son, He tried to please Him by sweet words and predicted that He will be paralyzed along with the trident by Lord Nārāyaṇa.

Then follows the hearing of the fruit of the deeds of the goddess.

Adhyaya - 36

On Nārada's request Lord Mahēśa, narrated to him the autumnal great annual worship of the goddess performed by Rāmā, for Rāvāṇa's assassination. The goddess Śarvāṇī who was pleased by his devotion remained in the city of Rāvāṇa bestowing victory as long as his merit lasted. The gods troubled by Rāvāṇa, lodged a complaint against him before Brahmā and requested Him to think over the means of killing him. Lord Brahmā, requested Viṣṇu to assume a human form to kill Rāvāṇa. Lord Viṣṇu assured Him and the gods that He would be born as a human being as the son of Daśaratha to slay Rāvāṇa and insisted upon their taking birth on the earth in the form of Rkṣas and Vānars. Viṣṇu asked Brahmā to think over the means by which the goddess Kātyāyanī residing in Laṅkā, might forsake it. Both the gods went to the peak of the mountain Kailāsa to pray to the goddess to put an end to Rāvāṇa. She appeared before them, seated on a throne of jewels, assuming eighteen hands, with a crescent on Her head and blooming face. Lord Viṣṇu informed Her about His promise to the gods to be born as the son of Daśaratha to kill Rāvāṇa. He also added that it was not possible for Him to kill Rāvāṇa as long as he was protected by the goddess. She also informed Him about Her thinking alike but she was reluctant to kill him Herself as Brahmā's boon should prove true.

It was decided that the goddess Kamalā (Lakṣmī) (actually a part of the goddess pārvatī) would be born as a woman on the earth immediately after Viṣṇu's taking birth. On Rāvaṇa's abducting Her and making Her enter Laṅkā, the goddess would abandon it, for the destruction of the wicked demon. The goddess informed Viṣṇu that after worshipping Her earthen image on the sea-coast in the autumn in keeping with the laid down ceremony, He would be able to kill Rāvaṇa. She told Viṣṇu that he who remembers Her devoutly without envying the whole world is protected by Her in this as well as the other world, while he who remembers Her in calamity even though troubling the world, in his case the fruit which accrues pertains to the other world.

Adhyaya - 37

Lords

On the request of Viṣṇu and Brahmā, to assist Viṣṇu in assassinating Rāvaṇa, Lord Śiva promised Him to render necessary help after being born as the son of wind, as a monkey. Lord Śiva promised Him that He would cross the ocean and search out Viṣṇu's wife and would perform great deeds. On Śiva's advice Viṣṇu requested Brahmā to incarnate in order to help Him. Lord Brahmā accepted His request and was born as a bear to give Him good counsel. Lord Brahmā added that the god of justice (Dharma) Himself had been born as the brother of Rāvaṇa named Vibhīṣaṇa who would also assist the incarnated Viṣṇu. Lord Viṣṇu incarnated as the

four sons of Daśaratha, while the goddess Lakṣmī also incarnated as the most beautiful daughter of king Janaka. Lord Maheśa after having incarnated as the son of wind god called Hanumān remained in Kiṣkindhā as the counsellor of the king of Vānāras. Similarly other gods also incarnated in the form of bears and monkeys.

Adhyaya - 38

Sage Vasiṣṭha initiated the four brothers in the sacred formula of the goddess. As a result they became proficient in all the śāstras. Once upon a time, sage Viśvāmitra requested Daśaratha to send Rāma along with Lakṣmaṇa to protect his sacrifice. On reaching the forest, Rāma killed the demoness Tāḍakā and obtained from the sage, the knowledge of discharging missiles. He burnt to ashes Subāhu who was obstructing the sacrifice and threw Mārīca far away on the sea-coast by a single arrow. Rāma released Ahalyā on the way to Mithilā, and broke the great bow of Lord Maheśa. Consequently king Janaka gave his four daughters to the four sons of Daśaratha in marriage. Sītā was obtained by Janaka while ploughing the field, while Ūrmilā was his legitimate daughter whereas the other two were the daughters of his brother. On the way back, the arrogant Bhārgava (Paraśurāma) confronted them whose pride was destroyed by Rāma.

On account of Daśaratha's granting two boons to Kaikayī, who demanded the kingdom for Bharata and the exile of Rāma for fourteen years in the forest, the coronation of Rāma frustrated. In company of Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa Rāma set out for Daṇḍakāraṇya, on the tenth of the bright half of the month of Iṣṭā.

On reaching Śṛṅgaverapura Rāma dismissed Sumentra. Then the two brothers prepared the matted hair and mounted a boat along with Sītā and crossed the river Ganges. They reached the hermitage of sage Bharadvāja and thence to Citrakūta. King Daśaratha on hearing from Sumentra about Rāma's entering the forest breathed his last. Bharata performed the obsequies of Daśaratha and went to Rāma to bring Him back. In keeping with Rāma's command Bharata had to return back. He remained in Nandigrāma thereafter for fourteen years. Rāma after having killed Virādha stayed for sometime in the Daṇḍakāraṇya. After constructing a purnāśālā in the Pañcavaṭī, where demoness Śūrpankhā struck with love approached Rāma, to make Him her husband. At the behest of Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa cut off her ears and nose. The demons Khara and Dūšana surrounded by fourteen thousand demons attacked Rāma on hearing the words of Śūrpankhā but Rāma killed all of them. Thereafter Śūrpankhā went to Laṅkā and informed Rāvaṇa about the happenings in the Janasthāna. On hearing her words, about the exquisite beauty of Sītā, Rāvaṇa thought of abducting Her.

He took with him Mārīca who assumed the form of a magical golden deer and dragged Rāma far away. On hearing the cry of the demon and considering it to be the words uttered by Rāma, Sītā sent Lakṣmeṇa towards Rāma. In the meanwhile Rāvaṇa abducted Sītā. Jaṭāyu opposed Rāvaṇa, but was killed by him who took Sītā away and entered Laṅkā at night along with Her and placed Her in Aśoka forest. Soon the almighty goddess protecting Laṅkā left it.

Adhyaya - 39

On returning, after killing Mārīca, Rāma did not find Jānaki in the Parnaśālā. Both the brothers wandered in the forest and saw Jaṭāyu, who told them that Rāma's beloved was abducted by Rāvaṇa. After burning him and after killing Kabandha, both of them went to the mountain Rṣyamūka, where Sugrīva, the son of the sun was residing along with his four ministers on account of the fear of Vālī. Rāma made Sugrīva his friend, killed Vālī and enthroned Sugrīva. Rāma stayed on the mountain Mālyavāt till the end of rainy season and thereafter collected a large army of Vāneras and sent his messengers for searching out Sītā. After having heard specifically about Rāvaṇa and Sītā from the mouth of Sampāti Hanumān jumped over the sea spread over a hundred yojanas by the encouraging words of the king of Rkṣas and entered the Laṅkā, in the evening. He wandered in it at night for seven nights searching for Sītā.

Hanumān finds out Sītā in the Aśoka garden. He approaches the goddess in the temple introduces himself to Her as a servant of Rāma, who had come there to search out Sītā and requested the goddess to leave the city, as decided by Her ownself formerly. Accordingly the goddess left Lañkā. Thereafter Māruti destroyed the forest of Aśoka trees and killed Akṣa, the son of Rāvāṇa. In order to mutilate Hanumān Rāvāṇa's soldiers tied pieces of cloth on his tail and sprinkled oil on it and set fire to it. But Hanumān set the whole Lañkā on fire by his burning tail and crossed the ocean and joined the search party. Thereafter all of them enjoyed the honey in the Madhuvana garden of king Sugrīva and approached Rāma. Then Rāma accompanied by the hosts of Vānaras set out for the sake of killing Rāvāṇa. In the meantime Rāvāṇa called all his ministers for counsel. Vibhīṣaṇa advised Rāvāṇa to handover Sītā to Rāma insisting upon the prowess of Rāma. On hearing it the enraged Rāvāṇa kicked him whereupon he went along with his four ministers to Rāma

Adhyaya - 40

Rāma made friendship with Vibhīṣaṇa considering him to be a seeker for protection and inaugurated him as a king of Lañkā. Rāma forced the ocean to accept limitation of his own accord. Thereafter in keeping with the commands of Sugrīva, Nala the son of Maya, constructed a bridge on the ocean within two Yāmas (i.e. six hours). Then Lord

Rāma, desirous to wage a war and to attain victory over Lañkā thought of worshipping the great goddess who must be asleep at that time, as it was Dakṣiṇāyane i.e. an improper time. He considered that the goddess Mahāmāyā was of the form of menes in that fortnight and performed the ceremony called Pārvaṇa Śrāddha. The demons Akatṁpana and Dhūmrākṣa were killed. Thereafter Prahesta the commander in chief of the Rākṣasas came forward who was also killed. Then Meghanāda the son of Rāvāna started for the battle in the night and remaining invisible in the sky showered arrows on the enemy army and tightly tied the two best of Rāghus with dreadful fetters made of serpents. At that moment Vibhīṣaṇa came over there and brought Rāma to consciousness who devoutly remembered the goddess Śarvāṇī. Thereafter Garuḍa came over there and eating the dreadful fetters freed the Rāghavas. Then Rāvāna comes to fight with Rāma. In a very tough battle that was fought between ^{Rāma} and Rāvāna, crores of valiant fighters were killed crores of Vānaras hurled mountain peaks and trees towards the Chariot of that wicked demon. Then badly wounded Rāvāna gave up fighting and entered the city.

Adhyaya - 41

Rāvāna defeated thus, in the battle made Kumbhakarna wake up for it. The unassailable Kumbhakarna prepared for the battle surrounded by five lakhs crores of demons. Lord Brahmā appeared there along with other gods

whom Rāma asked about the way, by which He would conquer them. Brahmā revealed Rāma's true natural form as the Lord of Kāmalā and added that He knew every thing and still was asking Him. He further advised Rāma to pray to goddess Durgā, who is the saviour from calamities, the giver of victory to all the worlds and Herself invincible. Brahmā further informed Him that at the time of drinking deadly poison and conquering death, in this world, Lord Śiva had remembered Her name. He assured Rāma that He would conquer Lakṣhṇā on appeasing Her. Without Her graceful glance nobody was capable to conquer Rāvaṇa who was devoutly devoted to Caṇḍikā. He also reminded Him about the goddess's advice to Him formerly in the presence of Himself and Lord Mahādeva.

Adhyaya - 42

Then Lord Brahmā, narrated a former incident in brief to Rāma, addressing Him as Viṣṇu and reminded Him that when He was requested to be born as a human being for the annihilation of Rāvaṇa. He (Viṣṇu) accompanied by the other two great gods went to Kailāsa to pray to the goddess protecting Rāvaṇa. The goddess advised Him to remember Her while fighting with Rāvaṇa in His human form and added that He would conquer Rāvaṇa by Her good grace by worshipping Her at an inopportune time. At that time Brahmā advised Rāma, to remember in the battle the sacred formula pertaining to the goddess and to adore Her in that inopportune time, to bring about the end of Rāvaṇa. In case Rāvaṇa worshipped the

goddess, in the outset of the bright fortnight, he would not die. Rāma pointed out to Brahmā that it was the dark fortnight in which the goddess was asleep and put forth before Him, His problem as to how to worship Her, Who might be asleep. By way of a reply to Rāma, Brahmā stated that where intellect follows righteousness there^{there} is peace and riches and lustre and that the goddess Śivā Herself is of the form of calamity where there is unrighteousness. In support of the above statement Brahmā narrated to Rāma, an anecdote as narrated by the goddess Herself formerly before Him.

Once upon a time Brahmā arrogantly told harsh words to Śambhu, on hearing which the angry Lord cut off the fifth head of Brahmā at once. After some time gods Brahmā and Viṣṇu went to salute the goddess to Her city where Lord Mahādeva had also come. On Brahmā's inquiring from the goddess about His offence, on account of which Lord Śiva had cut off His fifth head. She replied that the actions should be understood as indicating auspicious as well as inauspicious enjoyment. She was the real dispenser of the fruits of all sorts of actions and that only she is really independent. She reminded Brahmā, that He was overpowered by lust and desired to enjoy His own daughter Sandhyā as a result He attained such a fruit. According to Her that was the punishment for one desiring enjoyment of one's own daughter. Śiva eulogized the goddess attributing His attaining the status of Mrtyuñjaya to Her grace. The other

two gods also eulogized Her. Sītā was born from Mandodarī and was a daughter of Rāvana.

Adhyaya - 43

Rāma desired to know from Brahmā, the form of Mahēśvarī, Jaya Durgā and Her abode. By way of reply Brahmā told Him that she was omnipresent, remaining in the centre of Brahmāṇḍa and also outside of it. Her form which is in the heaven, on the earth, on the Himālayas and on Kailāsa in the proximity of Lord Śiva, is the Paurāṇikī Mūrti. Her other form which is outside of the Brahmāṇḍa is the form of Mahā Durgā which is the Tāntrikī Mūrti. Brahmāṇḍa includes the neither regions, the earth, the heaven and the Brahma Loka. Śiva Loka is a lakh of yojanas in extent and has arisen from the Brahma Loka. Viṣṇu Loka is higher than that. On the left hand side of Śiva Loka, there is the pleasant world of Gaurī wherein the Vaidiki form of the goddess resides. Goloka which is made up of pure light and is higher than all the Vaikuṇṭhalokas is the abode of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā. Even higher than that is the abode of the great goddess which is fifty crores of yojanas in extent. The goddess is of the form of consciousness. She is the supporter of the world, the protector of the world, the highest, the giver of salvation and the promulgator of infatuation and bondage. On account of Her sweet will, she Herself sports in Herself for ever in the form of Parame Śiva. She is the giver of the four human goals, and the destroyer of all

antagonists. In Her abode the spring season prevails for all times. The embodied selves who are meritorious and who have attained Sālokya are found there. Their women resemble the goddess and their men resemble Bhairavas. Thereafter the beauty of the goddess is described. Thus Brahmā described Her Tāntrikī Mūrti to Rāma and insisted upon Rāma's worshipping the Paurāṇikī Mūrti. Brahmā undertook to awaken the Mahādevī in the coming navamī after adoring Her under bilva tree.

Adhyaya - 44

Lord Rāma eulogized the goddess addressing Her as the lover of the battle, blood thirsty, devourer of flesh and a wearer of a garland of skulls, the lover of the blood of Mahiṣa and the killer of Mahiṣāsura. He also described Her as possessing red eyes, red teeth and with Her limbs smeared with blood, the killer of Raktabīja and Śumbha and Niśumbha. He praised Her as the protector of the righteous and the subduer of the throng of unrighteous persons. At the time of Rāma's eulogizing the goddess thus a voice from the air was heard all of a sudden which assured Him about His victory in the battle. It also stated that the goddess adored by Lord Brahmā under the bilva tree would give Him, His desired boon. On hearing these words, Rāma confided in His own victory. At that time Kumbhakarna possessing terrible prowess came over there surrounded by demons. By his roar the earth trembled and the ocean was agitated. Kumbhakarna crushed the monkeys under his feet and devoured some monkeys. A fierce battle was fought between them.

Adhyaya - 45

Lord Brahmā also worshipped that goddess in the bilva tree and awakened Her for Rāma's victory by reciting the eulogy Devī Sūkta. This eulogy is called the Veda Sūkta. According to Brahmā, the goddess was the highest Kāmalā, of the form of mass of highest bliss, of the form of highest flame, removing darkness, of the form of highest nectar, of the form of Nārāyaṇī, and of the form of highest self. Pranava and Svāhā were Her natural state. Bashfulness was Her nature. She was the origin of the three guṇas. She was Svāhā and Svadhā by Her nature. She was Durgā for one in miserable condition. She was Devarṣi. She was of the form of time viz. a month, a season, and the two ayanas. She was the enjoyer of Svāhā as well as svadhā. The Sun, the moon and the fire are Her eyes. She was of the nature of power. Thus eulogized the goddess foretold about Kumbhakarṇa's and Meghanāda's fall in the bottle. Her worship should be carried on from the nevaṃī of the dark fortnight to the navamī of the bright fortnight daily. The goddess instructed Brahmā and other gods to worship Her in accordance with Vāmamārgīye Upāsana and to offer Her an icon of the enemy Rāvana made of flour as bali to Her for Rāma's victory.

Adhyaya - 46

Since the adoration of the goddess performed by Brahmā and Rāma, from the ninth of the dark half (connected with the constellation Āndrā) till the ninth of the bright fortnight, under a bilva tree, the custom of Śāradīya Pūjā of the goddess started. The extraordinary fruits resulting from the worship of the goddess in Śārad are described. The Tāntrikī Upāsana, in keeping with Vāmamārgīya Upāsana and Sāttvikī Upāsana in keeping with Dakṣiṇa mārga are mentioned but those following the virtuous path, are forbidden to carry on Vāmamārgīya Upāsana. The temporal reward of this Mahāpūjā is the destruction of the enemy, the increase of riches and corn, victory in the battle and having sons and wife, while the reward of it, in the other world, is the attainment of the highest happiness. The goddess ordained that Her annual adoration should be invariably done in the three worlds.

Adhyaya - 47

As a result of the worship of the goddess carried on by the gods in heaven, and by Rāma on the earth, Kumbhakarna fell in the battle. Thereafter Atikāya set out for the great war, on the tenth of the dark half. Rāma went to Lord Brahmā, where He was worshipping the goddess and informed Him about the destruction of Kumbhakarna. On the fourth day in the night of the thirteenth Lakṣmana killed Atikāya. Thereafter again Rāma went to Lord Brahmā.

Rāma adored the goddess in the bilva tree in the morning and set out for the battle Rāvana appointed his son Meghanāda for the protection of the city and himself came out for the battle. He hurled a spear towards Vibhīṣana but Lakṣmaṇa hurriedly stood in front of it and fell down wounded. Rāvana tried to take away unconscious Lakṣmaṇa, but Hanumān struck him in his chest, as a result he fell, vomiting blood. Rāvana came back to the city. Then Indrajit set out for the battle and a great battle was fought between him and Lakṣmaṇa who was killed by Lakṣmaṇa on the Amāvāsyā day. On the seventh day, the goddess entered the writing leaf for the sake of killing Rāvana through Rāma's bow. Brahmā performed Her Mahāpūjā on Mahāṣṭamī day. The goddess who was pleased entered the arrows of Rāmacandra. Rāma cut off the heads of Rāvana again and again ⁱⁿ the battle, still Rāvana did not die. Lord Brahmā adored the goddess on Mahānavamī, who approached Rāvana in the form of nescience. As he was deluded by Her Māyā, he forgot Her and Her devotion. On Rāma's meditating upon the goddess Lord Brahmā brought an infallible missile given by Her to Rāma. The missile discharged by Rāma, pierced the heart of Rāvana and he died. On Rāma's request the king of gods showered nectar and consequently the monkeys killed in the battle, were again enlivened. Vibhīṣana performed the final obsequies of Rāvana. Rāma accompanied by Sītā, Lakṣmaṇa and monkeys went where the goddess was worshipped by Lord Brahmā.

Adhyaya - 48

This adhyāya is devoted to elaboration showing the glory of the goddess and the importance of Śāradīya pūjā. Rāma permeated by the devotion of the goddess eulogized Her with joyous mind. The other best of gods came over there, and eulogized Her. In that festival the residents of the three worlds were over-joyed in heaven on the earth, and in Rasātala. The grand sire Brahmā adored the image in the morning on the tenth and then dismissed it in the ocean. Then Rāmacandra consecrated Vibhīṣaṇa as the king of Lāṅkā. Thereafter Rāma accompanied by Sītā, Lakṣmaṇa. Sugrīva, Vibhīṣaṇa and the Vāṇaras mounted the Puṣpaka aerial car and set out for Ayodhyā. Thus the Lord, the immutable puruṣa, Himself worshipped the goddess, in keeping with the rites in the autumn. The goddess is most fit to be worshipped in the world, and he who does not worship Her is a sinner. The follower of any sect should invariably adore Her in the autumnal festival. Since caṇḍikā captures the wicked in the form of cattle, therefore Her solely devoted devotees should offer a victim to Her of an animal. In the three worlds there is no merit equalling that arising from the adoration of Devī. He who devoutly hears this very best Rāmāyaṇa, an extensive glory of the goddess, destroying great sins, goes to the rank of the goddess, which is difficult to obtain even by Brahmā etc.

Adhyaya - 49

Nārada inquired of Lord Mahādeva the reason of goddess Maheśvarī's incarnation as a man on the earth. On Lord Śiva's replying him that it was due to His desire, that the goddess incarnated as a Māyāpuruṣa at the end of Dvāpara, Nārada expressed his desire to know in details about His desire and about Kālī's incarnation in that form.

Once upon a time, Lord Śiva became curious while sporting with Pārvatī, in a temple on Kailāsa, and observing Her exquisite beauty considered that a woman's birth was very fine. He told Her to fulfil His desire. On Her promising Him to do so, Lord Śiva insisted upon Her to incarnate as a man anywhere on the earth and added that He would assume the form of a woman. Thereupon the goddess told Him that she would incarnate on the earth, in the form of a man, in the house of Vasudeva as Kṛṣṇa and requested Her Lord to become a woman. Thereupon Lord Śiva agreed to incarnate as Rādhā, the daughter of Vṛṣabhānu. He foretold that His eight forms would be born as women viz. the queens Rukmiṇī, Satyabhāmā etc. The goddess ordained that Her two beloved friends viz. Vijayā and Jayā would be born as two men viz. Śrīdāmā and Vasudāmā. She also informed Maheśvara about the agreement between Herself and Viṣṇu in keeping with which He would be the elder brother. The another reason for that incarnation was to remove the burden of the earth in the form of kings like Kāmsa and Duryodhana etc. who were former demons killed in the battle by Devī

and by Viṣṇu who were born again at the end of Dvāpara's on hearing the complaint of Brahmā the goddess informed Him about Her inability to fight with the best of Vṛṣṭriyas in Her form as women, as they were devoted to Her female form. She ordained that Her Bhadrakālī form would be born as a man, characterised by the marks characteristic of Viṣṇu. She further told that Viṣṇu also by His part would become a pāṇḍava called Arjuna, whose elder brother would be Dharma himself called Yudhiṣṭhira. According to Her, his another elder brother would be Bhīmasena born from a part of the wind god, and the Aśvins would incarnate as Mēdrī's two sons. All of them would be following the path of righteousness. The cruel Duryodhana with bad intellect would disrespect Kṛṣṇā born from a part of the goddess. In the kuruksetra war the whole earth would be devoid of best kings. At the end of the war the Pāṇḍava brothers practising righteousness and solely devoted to the goddess would remain.

Adhyaya - 50

On the Prayer of Brahmā, the goddess incarnated by Her part, as Kṛṣṇa, the son of Vasudeva for the accomplishment of the work of the gods. Lord Viṣṇu also bifurcated Himself and was born on the earth in the house of Vasudeva as Rāma, by one part and by another He was born as Dhanañjaya, the son of pāṇḍu. Formerly Aditi the mother of the gods and kaśyapa the progenitor prayed to the goddess devoutly and practised penance for two thousand divine years.

They chose a boon that she would incarnate in their house at the end of Dvāpara. The goddess replied that she would incarnate as a man in their house in keeping with Lord Śambhu's desire. Her dreadful form would become amiable with two eyes and two arms and the garland of skulls in Her neck would become Vanamālā. It would bear the characteristic mark of Viṣṇu and would be gratifying the Gopīs Kāśyapa was born as Vasudeva in the race of yadus. Aditi bifurcating Herself was born as Rohiṇī as well as Devakī. Vasudeva married both of them. At the time of Devakī's departure for her husband's house, a voice from the air, declared that the eighth offspring of this one would be the killer of Kāṁsa. On hearing it Kāṁsa tried to kill Devakī. But Vasudeva saved her by promising Kāṁsa to handover all his progeny. Thus the cruel Kāṁsa killed six sons of Devakī.

Brahmā reminded the goddess about Her promise to incarnate as a man from Devakī and insisted upon Her to take birth as the seventh child. Thereupon she assured Brahmā that the divine speech would not be futile. She informed Brahmā about the agreement made with Viṣṇu in keeping with which He would be born by part from Vasudeva through Devakī, while she Herself would bifurcate Herself and would enter the wombs of Rohiṇī as well as yaśodā. In the fifth month after conception Viṣṇu and the goddess would exchange the wombs of Devakī and Rohiṇī respectively.

The goddess explained to Brahmā the way in which Vasudeva would exchange the child of Devakī and that of Yasodā. On the eighth of the dark half of Śrāvaṇa in the mid night when the moon was in the constellation Rohiṇī, and when the sign Taurus of the Zodiac was in the ascendent, the goddess was born from Devakī as a boy. In order to remove the fear of Devakī, best kaim̐sa would kill him, the boy transformed himself as goddess Durgā possessing terrible face and having a Corpse for Her vehicle. She looked frightful on account of lolling the tongue, and also due to the garland of skulls. On Vasudeva's eulogy the goddess transformed Herself and assumed a beautiful form possessing ten arms.

After Her transforming Herself into a boy Vasudeva asked him to show him what He should do. The boy Kṛṣṇa advised him to take Him away to Yaśodā and to bring back her child. Vasudeva followed His advice. The guards informed Kaim̐sa about the birth of the eighth child of Devakī whom he tried to kill by striking against a stone slab where upon she appeared in the sky and told him that she had been born as a boy from Devakī and had remained in the house of Nanda Gopa in Gokula.

Adhyaya - 51

After having come to know about the birth of a son, Nanda celebrated the event, the next morning and gave thousands of cows, precious clothes, and riches to Brahmins. Thereafter he went to Mathurā to pay tax to the king. Kaim̐sa sent Pūtanā the demoness to Gokula who assumed a beautiful form. The

wonderstruck residents of Vraja inferred as to whether she must be Śaci, the wife of Indra or Rati the wife of Kāma. That beautiful woman, asked Yeśodā to hand her over her son and when he was handed over she suckled him her breast smeared with poison. But Kṛṣṇa sucked her vitals¹ along with milk. Then the woman assumed a dreadful form and speaking, "give up", breathed her last. Kṛṣṇa all of a sudden transformed Himself into another Kālikā on her chest. In half a moment, she abandoned the body of the demoness and transformed Herself into a handsome young boy. The residents of Vraja were wonderstruck to see this and considered the boy as the preeminent highest śakti. On hearing about the death of Pūtanā Kāṁsa sent the demon Trṇāvarta, who caught him in his arms and took him into the sky. ^{Again Kṛṣṇa transformed Him self into} Kālī and roared loudly. The demon infatuated by Her great roar fell down on the ground, whose head was severed with a sword by Her. Then she again became a boy.

Lord Śambhu was born in the house of Vṛṣabhānu assuming the form of a woman called Rādhā who used to go to Kṛṣṇa daily and used to place Him in Her lap. On hearing about Trṇāvarta's death, Kāṁsa was worried about how to bring the son of Nanda there. Rāma, the son of Rohiṇī used to sport with Kṛṣṇa daily along with Śrīdāmā and Vasudāmā. Kṛṣṇa stayed in Gokula desirous to sport with Rādhā.

Adhyaya - 52

By way of a reply to Nārada's inquiry about the reason why the goddess who had incarnated from Devakī remained in the house of Nandagopa, and about the previous births of Nanda

and Yaśodā Lord Śiva told him that Dakṣa repented for losing his daughter, on account of slandering Śive unknowingly due to infatuation, and decided to practise penance along with his wife Prasūti for a hundred divine years. He worshipped Ambikā who appeared before them. Thereupon they selected a boon that the goddess be born as their daughter, which was granted. However it was made clear that she would not remain in his house, in the form of a daughter, remembering his former mis-deed viz. slandering Lord Śive. The goddess added that she would remain for some days in the house of prasūti in order to give the fruit of her penance.

Adhyaya - 53

Nārada inquired of Lord Mahādeva about a brief narration of the deeds of the goddess in the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, particularly about how he wandered in Gokula along with Rādhā and also how He removed the burden of the earth. In the course of His wanderings in Gokula in His childhood Kṛṣṇa along with all cowherd boys killed the demon Dhenuka etc. and subdued the serpentkālīya and sported alongwith Rādhā as well as the cowherdesses in the beautiful Vṛndāvana. Kṛṣṇa by the harmony of the sound of the flute gathered together cowherdesses and made Rādhā His principal queen consort and sported with them. The amorous sport of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa is described. At some time Rādhikā became Śambhu possessing five beautiful lotus like faces and Kṛṣṇa after Himself having become Gaurī took a walk. Then there is the description of Rāsekrīdā of Rādhā Kṛṣṇa along with Gopis. It was a full moon day in the autumn when the forest was

filled with full blown flowers, and appeared pleasant on account of blowing of gentle winds and the buzzing of the bees, and the cooing of the cuckoos. The ponds looked beautiful on account of full blown Kalhāra, Kumuda and lotuses. Then blemishless moon shone forth gladdening all the creatures and melting the minds of women. Kṛṣṇa played upon His flute on hearing which all the best cowherdesses gave up their household works and gathered together. Both Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā assumed eight forms in a moment all of a sudden and disappeared and went to the atmospheric region and began a sportive circular dance. Other cowherdesses not seeing Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in their midst who were roaming in the atmospheric region, cried in the forest. On hearing their lamentations both Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā again appeared before them in the forest. Thus Kṛṣṇa along with cowherdesses performed Rāsakṛīdā for many a night in the forest beginning with the full moon day of Kārttika.

Once upon a time a demon Vṛṣabha impelled by Kaiśsa went to Gokula in order to kill Rāma and Kṛṣṇa. But was killed by Kṛṣṇa.

Adhyaya - 54

Once upon a time sage Nārada, went to king Kaiśsa in Mathurā and informed him about the real identity of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma as well as that of the daughter of Nanda, and added that the two (Kṛṣṇa and Rāma) had killed his soldiers. On hearing it Kaiśsa drew out a sword from the sheath with a view to proceed to kill Devakī and Vasudeva. But the sage prevented him from killing them. Thereupon Kaiśsa sent Akūrā to Gokula

to bring Rāma and Kṛṣṇa with the intention of getting them slain in wrestling. Akrūra divulged the plan of Kaiśsa to kill them before Rāma and Kṛṣṇa. He also added that he had come to know about their real nature from a yogin and that their purpose was to remove the burden of the earth. Both of them along with Nanda and other cowherds went to Madhupura with different products from the cows, to hand over to the king by way of tax. At the city gate Kaiśsa had placed an elephant named Kuvalaya to slay Rāma and Kṛṣṇa. But Kṛṣṇa killed the elephant and entered the city. In the wrestling that followed. Muṣṭika was killed by Rāma and Cāpūra was killed by Kṛṣṇa, along with other wrestlers. On Kaiśsa's ordering his messengers to remove Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, to punish all the cowherds residing in Vraja and to kill Nanda along with his wife, Kṛṣṇa transformed Himself into Kālika, with fearful form, and severed his (Kaiśsa) head with a sword. Thereafter Kṛṣṇa approached Devakī and Vasudeva and removed their fetters, consoled the queens of the departed king and crowned Ugrasena as the king. Vasudeva and Nanda embraced each other. With tears in his eyes Vasudeva thanked Nanda for taking care of his sons and added that really speaking Nanda and Yaśodā were their real parents. Vasudeva requested Nanda to place the two boys in his house, and to go to Vraja. Thereupon Nanda departed with tears in his eyes. The two brothers assured him that they would come again to Vraja to see him and their mother. On Nanda's approaching Vraja, all the cowherdesses cried, as a result of their not seeing Rāma and Kṛṣṇa. In order to console them Kṛṣṇa sent

Uddhava to Vreja, who consoled them by conveying the message of Kṛṣṇa. Then Vasudeva invited Gargācārya and performed their investiture of the sacred thread ceremony. Gargācārya taught them all the scriptures and the science of archery.

Adhyaya - 55

Viṣṇu had been born from Kuntī through the god Indra (Purandara) as Arjuna, who possessed great strength and prowess. He knew the essence of all the scriptures and was an expert in the science of archery. His other four brothers viz. Dharma putra etc. were also brave and endowed with great strength and prowess. They were engaged in the performance of righteousness and followed the path of truth. On attaining youth they ruled the kingdom. The sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra envied them. Duryodhana tried in vain to kill the Pāṇḍavas. The king of Vṛṣṇī knew the evil design of Duryodhana, and sent Akrūra as an envoy to Dhṛtarāṣṭra who advised him to treat the sons of Pāṇḍu and his own sons equally. To that Dhṛtarāṣṭra agreed, but expressed his inability to check his sons. After the return of Akrūra from Hastināpura, Kṛṣṇa entered the city Dvārakā for residence. Bhīṣmaka the king of Vidarbha arranged the ceremony of the selection of the bridegroom of his daughter Rukmiṇī, born from Śiva's part. Rukmi, the son of Bhīṣmaka, was eager to handover his sister to Śisupāla, the king of Cedi and hence he did not invite kṛṣṇa. But Kṛṣṇa abducted Rukmiṇī while going to the temple of goddess Durgā. In the fight with all the kings Kṛṣṇa became victorious. Similarly He married the seven brides viz. Jāmbavetī etc. who were born from the part of Śambhu. Similarly

Kṛṣṇa conquered the heroes in many battles and married many other brides. He also conquered Narakāsura (Bhauma) and brought thousands of beautiful ladies and married them. The sons of Pāṇḍu also got married, and invited Kṛṣṇa, desirous of waging a war. Kṛṣṇa advised Yudhiṣṭhira to perform Rājāsūya sacrifice. Bhīma etc. were sent to conquer the kings in four directions. The brothers of Yudhiṣṭhira conquered all the kings. Then Kṛṣṇa got Jarāśāṅgha slain by Bhīmasena with a lance in the battle. On Śiśupāla's opposing the first adoration of Kṛṣṇa, in the said sacrifice, his head was cut off by Kṛṣṇa. Jealous Duryodhana played the game of dice with king Yudhiṣṭhira who was defeated by wicked Duryodhana by trickery and lost his kingdom. Then the game was started a second time, when it was decided that the defeated party should go to a forest and reside therein for twelve years and remain incognito for one year. In this game also Yudhiṣṭhira was defeated. Then Duryodhana insulted Draupadī in the midst of the assembly. The elderly persons restored Draupadī to the Pāṇḍavas who went to the forest to dwell in.

Adhyaya - 56

In the course of their wanderings Pāṇḍavas came to Kāmākhya. They prayed to Her for regaining their kingdom and also for the death of their enemies. The goddess appeared before them, and assured Yudhiṣṭhira about his victory in the battle and about the annihilation of the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra. She also disclosed to them the real nature of the son of Devakī and that of Arjuna. She foretold that Bhīma would kill all the

sons of Dhṛterāṣṭra in the battle, and Yudhiṣṭhira would again attain the kingdom. Yudhiṣṭhira eulogized the goddess, whereupon she appeared before him and asked to choose his desired boon. Yudhiṣṭhira requested Her to manage in such a way, that they might be able to pass the period of remaining incognito without difficulty. She advised him to go to the city of the king of Matsya along with his wife and brothers and to reside there. They kept their weapons in the hollow of a Śamī tree outside the city and then entered the city. Yudhiṣṭhira requested king Virāṭa to give him shelter, as he was a Brahmin, called Kaṅka adept in the game of dice and was formerly protected by the son of Dharma. The king appointed Bhīmesena as a cook in the royal kitchen. Arjuna as Bṛhannalā was appointed as the teacher of the princess to teach dancing. Draupadī called Sairandhrī became a female attendant in the apartment of women of queen Sudeṣṇā. The two sons of Mādri were appointed as the horsegroom and as a cowherd.

Once upon a time, Kīcaka happened to see Sairandhrī in the Palace of Sudeṣṇā on the advent of the eleventh month. He was enamoured of her beauty and asked Sudeṣṇā to send her in his presence. On Sairandhrī's refusal to approach Kīcaka, he tried to forcibly enjoy her. Then she eulogized Durgā, who assured her that the lascivious man would be subject to death. Once upon a time, when Sairandhrī had gone to the house of wicked Kīcaka for some important work, he caught her by her hand. But she ran away knocking him down. She was chased by him even

into the court of the king Virāṭa, who did not protect her. On the advice of Bhīma, Sairandhrī invited Kīcaka in dancing hall, where Kīcaka was killed by Bhīma. The Upakīcakas decided to burn Sairandhrī along with Kīcaka forcibly but Bhīma saved her by killing all of them. She was asked by the king to leave the place, but she requested him to tolerate her for some time only and assured him that she would quit his residence and would go away before long. The Kauravas attacked the Matsya country, in order to find out Pāṇḍavas. But they were defeated by Pārtha. Thereafter the marriage ceremony of the son of Arjuna (Abhimanyu) with the daughter of king Virāṭa was celebrated. Then the preparations for the war began. The Pāñcālas and some other kings under the leadership of Kāśīrāja came to render help to the Pāṇḍavas. All of them along with Matsyas went to the Kurukṣetra.

Adhyaya - 57

Lord Kṛṣṇa placed his army under the control of the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Himself joined the side of the Pāṇḍavas along with Sātyaki. The kings residing in different regions came to assist either the Pāṇḍavas or the Kauravas. The great souled ones like Bhīṣma, the revered Vyāsa etc. tried to dissuade Duryodhana from waging a war. But it was in vain. Before the beginning of the war, king Yudhiṣṭhira got down from his chariot and bowed down individually to his elderly persons like Bhīṣma, Droṇa etc. after approaching them who were arrayed for the battle and sought their consent for the battle and returned to his own chariot. Then all the Pāṇḍavas got down from

their respective chariots and eulogized the mother of the world for attaining victory in the battle. In their eulogy, they praised the goddess as the only cause of the origin, sustenance and destruction of the universe. She was the slayer of the wicked demons and the destroyer of miseries. Her form was unthinkable. The trinity proceeds to perform its work of creation etc. after seeking Her grace. The creation, protection and destruction are the sport of the goddess. Those who resort to the goddess in calamities, in their case, there is no fear, here as well as hereafter. She was worshipped by the leader of the gods in the battle between gods and demons. Due to Her grace Rāma also killed the family of the Rākṣasas. Victory can not be obtained without Her worship. The goddess was pleased by their eulogy and gave them a boon to win a victory over their enemies and after their annihilation to regain their kingdom she disclosed to them that she had been born as Vāsudeva for the removal of the burden of the earth. The hearing of the fruit of this eulogy is the attainment of victory. Bhīṣma remained as a commander in chief of the Kaurava army for the first ten days during which time Karṇa laid down his weapons on account of his envy of Bhīṣma. Bhīma remained in front of the Pāṇḍava army. Bhīṣma fell on the tenth day when the Sun was visible before setting by the great missile of Dhenañjaya. Bhīṣma remained on the bed of arrows awaiting Utterāyana in keeping with the boon of his father. Then the Kaurava chiefs made Droṇa, their commander in chief and fought a tumultuous battle, again for five days. Abhimanyu was killed in the battle, by the leaders

of the sons of Dhṛterāṣṭra by resorting to unrighteous war. Before next Sun set Arjuna killed Jayadratha in keeping with his oath. Droṇa was killed by the son of Drupada on the fifteenth day. Karṇa led the Kaurava army for two days and killed the demon Ghoṭotkaca. Karṇa was killed by Arjuna. King Śalya was killed by Yudhiṣṭhira, on the eighteenth day. In the duel between Duryodhana and Bhīma, Duryodhana was killed by Bhīma, by his club. All other sons of Dhṛterāṣṭra were already killed by Bhīma during the battle. Aśvatthāmā attacked the army camp of the Pāṇḍavas in the night and killed the unassailable Dhṛṣṭadyumna and the five sons of Draupadī, while fast asleep. Then Aśvatthāmā and Kṛpācārya were defeated by Arjuna and were forced to give up the fight. Thus eighteen Akṣauhīnis were killed within eighteen days. The Pāṇḍavas along with Vāsudeva performed the obsequies of all the kings. Bhīṣma gave up his vital airs on the eighth day of the bright half in the month of Māgha. The sons of Pṛthvī enjoyed the kingdom by the grace of the great goddess.

Adhyaya - 58

Thus after having removed the burden of the earth. Kṛṣṇa pondered over returning to His own place again. In the meantime Brahmā approached Him and reminded Him to return to His original place and to protect the residents of heaven, as He had accomplished the task of the removal of the burden of the earth and had fulfilled whatever was desired by Śambhu. Kṛṣṇa promised Him to come back again to His own place. Lord Kṛṣṇa held a council and informed the members about His intention.

First of all He referred to the fact that the descendents of the race of yadū were dead on account of the curse of the sage Aṣṭāvakra. Those few who were left, were not interested in the kingdom nor in the existence on the earth. He also expressed His desire to go to heaven and asked them to send messengers to Yudhiṣṭhira in Hastināpura immediately. On hearing the message the Pāṇḍavas were dejected and decided to follow Kṛṣṇa along with Draupadī. They went to Dvārakā. The Pāṇḍavas and Draupadī expressed their desire to follow Him in the other world Balarāma proposed that Kṛṣṇa should take with Him those born in the lineage of Vṛṣṇi along with Him without delay. Then Lord Kṛṣṇa distributed riches to the twice born ones immediately and went out of His city. Kṛṣṇa was followed by Rāma along with all the Vṛṣṇis as well as with Pāṇḍavas, their ministers, and women folk. All of them came to the sea shore. In the meanwhile Nandi brought there a chariot decorated by jewels to which lions were yoked from atmospheric regions. Brahmā brought many thousands of chariot and remained in the sky along with the gods. The best of gods showered flowers in torrents joyfully and played upon different musical instruments and the celestial damsels danced. Kṛṣṇa transformed Himself into Kālī all of a sudden and ascending the great chariot went to koilāsa immediately. Draupadī merged into that goddess Herself after touching the water of the sea. The Pāṇḍavas except Arjuna, mounted chariots and attained heaven. Rāma and Arjuna merged into the form of Lord Viṣṇu and went to Vāikunṭha mounted on an eagle. The wives of Kṛṣṇa, Rukmiṇī

and others assumed the form of Śambhu and went to their highest place. The other wives of Śrīkṛṣṇa after having abandoned their bodies became Bhairavas as before in a moment. Śrīdāmā transformed himself as Jayā and Vasudāmā as Vijayā. Those who hear or recite with devotion, the deeds of the Kṛṣṇa incarnation of the mother of the world, would attain incomparable happiness in the world and would attain the position of goddess.

Adhyaya - 59

Mahādeva informed Nārāḍa on his request that Kālī's residence was by the side of the residence of the goddess Durgā, and it was well protected and very pleasant. It was surrounded on all sides by the ocean of nectar and was made up of the mass of precious jewels. In its middle there stood a pleasant city with enclosures and arched gate ways made up of jewels with four gates in four directions. All the red eyed Bhairavas holding a club with a skull at the top, used to protect in thousands all those gates. In the middle of that city, there is a fine temple of different jewels, possessing hundreds of pillars and enveloped by gold. In its middle, there is a great throne made up of jewels, supported by a myriad lions on which a corpse is kept, on which the Mahāvidyā Mahākālī always stands. She Herself is the suspicious Mayāmāyī remaining in the lotus of the form of heart of every one. She is the Creator, sustainer, and destroyer of crores of Brahmāṇḍas, by Her own sweet will. She is one alone and is of the form of Brahman. The sixty four yoginīs are Her maid

servants, who performed various activities in that city. On Her right hand side there is Mahākelā Sadāsiva, with whom she always sports. The Lord of the gods, became free from the sin arising by slaying a Brahmin by merely seeing Her. The outer court-yard is surrounded from all sides by rampart made up of jewels, which is always protected by the leaders of ganas. Inside that there are the upayoginīs viz. Kāmākhyā etc. On the northern side there is a beautiful forest of Pārijāta, in which the spring season remains forever. Brahmā and Viṣṇu assuming the form of different birds sing the deeds of Kālī with sweet notes in it. In the east there is a beautiful tank decorated by golden lotuses, white waterlilies and red lotuses, having stair-cases made up of jewels. On its bank full blown Campaka and Ashok flowers are found. Similarly there is a separate beautiful city of each one of other nine lores there. On their right hand side Sadāsiva remains assuming different forms separately.

Adhyaya - 60

Mahādeva further narretes to Nārada the incident of Indira's becoming polluted by committing Brahmahatyā. The demon Vṛtra formerly arose on account of the boon of Brahmā. He conquered all the gods and himself became Indra. He became the sovereign over the three worlds. Brahmā had ordained his death at the hands of Indra by the weapon made up of the bones of Dadhīci. On the advice of Brhaspati Furandara came to know about it, and went to Dadhīci desiring to beg the elms of his bones. When asked by Dadhīci, Indra informed him that Vṛtra

had become the sovereign of the three worlds after defeating the Lokapālas. As a result the gods had abandoned heaven and were residing on the earth, just like human beings. He (Indra) requested Dadhīci to oblige them by giving up his vital airs, in order to enable them to prepare the weapon from his bones. After thinking for a while, Dadhīci agreed to do so, and added that it was his good luck as the body was transient and the duty eternal. After his death Indra collected his bones and fashioned different sorts of weapons by them, and killed Vṛtra. Thus the sin of killing a Brahmin was committed by Indra.

Adhyaya - 61

Indra asked his counsellors to show him a way to get rid of the sin of Brahmicide committed by him by asking Dadhīci his bones. The sages opined that the sage Dadhīci was liberated while still alive and had gone to heaven by his own sweet will. Consequently complete Brahmahatyā had not occurred in that case. In order to avert that sin they advised Indra to perform Aśvamedha yajña. Once upon a time Vārade came to the place where Indra was performing Aśvamedha and advised him to seek the advice of his preceptor Gautama, to be free from Brahmicide. Gautama advised him to approach the great grand siye and to ask him about the world of the goddess Kālī. He also added that she was the destroyer of great sins and advised him to see Her in order to get rid of Brahmicide. On Indra's approaching Brahmā, He was told that Brahmā Himself did not know where Her city was

situated. Even Brahmā had seen Her wherever she manifested Herself by Her grace. In order to search out the city of the goddess Brahmā and Indra went to Vaikunṭha. Lord Brahmā first met Lord Viṣṇu and informed Him about Indras's awaiting outside His city gate, to see Him. On Viṣṇu's ordering Garuḍa, he brought Indra in His presence. Then Brahmā informed Viṣṇu about what sage Gautama had said.

Adhyaya - 62

After observing silence, for some time Viṣṇu told Indra about His ignorance of the place of residence of Kālī, and added that Lord Maheśvara know about it. Thereafter all the three gods mounted their vehicles and went to see Lord Maheśvara. On being asked Viṣṇu told Śiva about the purpose of their visit viz. to free Indra from the sin of Brahmahatyā. Thereafter all the four gods set out in their vehicles towards the place of residence of Kālī. On the way, they expressed their view that Kālī was supreme authority, and that she was the real creator, protector and destroyer of the world. They were wonderstruck to observe the city of the goddess and forgot even the purpose of their visit.

Adhyaya - 63

Once upon a time, the Yoginīs came over there, to pluck the flowers and inquired of the four gods about the purpose of their visit. They replied that they had come to see the goddess Kālī Herself. Even though the gods were there for a long time, yet they could not see the goddess, as they were deluded

by Her Māyā. On Śiva's advice all the gods came to the principal city gate and got down from their vehicles, and bowed down to the goddess. Under His leadership, the gods entered the city protected by Bhairavīs. At the entrance of the inner apartments, they saw Gaṇanāyaka who was told to inform about their arrival to see the goddess. The three great gods were first admitted in the presence of the goddess. Then follows the description of the goddess. Mahākāle Sadā Śiva was on the right hand side of the goddess as described in Tantric works. All of a sudden Śiva merged into Mahākāle which was the first miracle. Suddenly the great goddess disappeared along with Mahākāle from the sight of the two gods, which was the second miracle. Actually the two were in front of them, but they could not see them, as they were deluded by Her Māyā. Then Brahmā and Viṣṇu eulogized the goddess, stressing Her immanent as well as Her transcendental aspect. The eulogy also has Pantheistic ideas contained in it. At the end of the eulogy, the goddess became visible to them along with Mahākāle which was the third miracle. From Mahākāle, Śaṅkara again got separated which was the fourth miracle. Lord Śaṅkara drew the attention of Kālī to the fact that Indra was awaiting outside the city, to have Her glimpse. On Her giving Her consent, Śiva brought Indra in Her presence, after giving Him, a little dust of the inner apartments, in keeping with Her advice. Then follows the eulogy of the goddess by Indra. Lastly there is the hearing of the fruit of this anecdote.

Adhyaya - 64

Nārada desired to know from Mahādeva about the birth of the goddess in the house of Himavat viz. Gaṅgā. He also inquired about the manner of Her assuming liquid form, and also about Her descent on the earth. After the marriage of Gaṅgā with Śive Viṣṇu invited both to Vaikuṅṭha. Viṣṇu placed Śive on a throne of jewels, and requested Him to sing a song, adding that after suffering from separation of Satī for long He was united with Her part. His first song deluded all the Lords of the gods, Brāhmā etc. On hearing the second song Lord Viṣṇu with horripilation on His body, fell down on the ground unconscious. On hearing the third song Lord Viṣṇu was transformed into a liquid form. As a result the whole Vaikuṅṭha was flooded with water. Brāhmā collected that water in His Kamēṇḍalu which was mixed with the liquid form of Gaṅgā as distinct from Her own form and after having consoled Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī went to His own city. Thus the goddess Gaṅgā transformed Herself into liquid form and remained into the water pot of Brāhmā.

Adhyaya - 65

Once upon a time the demon king Bali, snatched away the three worlds from the king of gods. Aditi the mother of the gods, became miserable on that account, and prayed to Lord Viṣṇu, who was pleased by her penance and appeared before her. Thereupon she requested Him to hand over the kingdom snatched away by Bali to Indra. Viṣṇu promised her that He would be born

from Kaśyapa through her in the form of a Dwarf and would accomplish her desired objects. As promised by Viṣṇu, a Dwarf son was born from Aditi, who approached king Bali and begged from him the earth measurable by three steps. Bali asked Him to ask for greater strip, but Vāmana refused to do so. The preceptor of the demons Śukra, warned Bali not to give the earth as desired by the Dwarf. He also told Bali that Bali's giving this alms would benefit Indra. He also disclosed the real identity of Vāmana. But Bali did not change his mind. When Bali declared on oath, his intention to give the alms to Vāmana, He assumed the form of the universe and raised His foot which touched the end of the Brāhmāṇḍe, Brahmā in order to worship Viṣṇu's foot poured the water from His water pot on the toe of Viṣṇu which remained therein. Viṣṇu advised Bali to consider that his three worlds were deposited then with Śakra and asked him to go to Pātāla along with Dānava. Viṣṇu promised Bali that under the rulership of the eight Manu, he would become the king of the gods.

Adhyaya - 66

Lord Brahmā thought that Gaṅgā in the form of water, must have become steady after having attained the lotus like foot of Hari. With a view to make Gaṅgā ooze out from the foot of Lord Viṣṇu, Brahmā practised penance in Vaikuṅṭha. He prayed to Gaṅgā, for long. Thereafter Gaṅgā assured Him that she would remain for some time in the body of Lord Hari and thereafter after assuming liquid form would come out from His foot by aulogizing of king Bhagīratha and would sanctify the three worlds. She also added that she would reach the earth known as

Bhāgīrathī and after having released all his ancestors would enter the nether regions. Bhagīratha worshipped Viṣṇu for long in order to bring down Gaṅgā on the earth. On being asked to choose a boon by Viṣṇu, Bhagīratha requested Him to release Gaṅgā for the restoration of his ancestors. Viṣṇu granted Bhagīratha his desired boon and advised him to pray to Gaṅgā, as well as Lord Śambhu. After practising penance for many thousands of years, Bhagīratha visualized Gaṅgā, and was granted his desired boon. Gaṅgā further advised him to propitiate Lord Śambhu as He was Her husband and she was under His control. Bhagīratha prayed to Lord Mahēśa as advised by Gaṅgā who appeared before him. The king prostrated before Him and eulogized the great god by His eight thousand names.

Adhyaya - 67

Bhagīratha eulogized Lord Śiva by one thousand names of the Lord who appeared before him and asked him to tell Him about his desired object. Thereupon Bhagīratha expressed his desire to take away Gaṅgā on the earth for the release of his forefathers, the sons of Sagara who were burnt to ashes by the curse of sege Kapila in the hole leading to the nether regions. Lord Śiva assured him that his desire would be fulfilled by His grace before long. The reciter of this eulogy called Sahasraṇāma composed by the king Bhagīratha would attain release. Thereafter a detailed description of the Phala Śruti of the thousand names of Lord Śiva follows.

Adhyaya - 68

At the time when Bhagīratha was about to bring down the Ganges on the ground, the presiding deity of the earth approached him and requested him to manage in such a way that the Ganges while coming down might flow on the earth, in all the four directions and might meet all the four oceans. She was advised by the king to worship Brāhmā. Thereupon the goddess earth decided to go to heaven along with the king. On hearing the sound of the Conch, blown by Bhagīratha, Gaṅgā came out from the foot of Viṣṇu and fell on the peak of mountain Meru. The overjoyed king gave up blowing the Conch and began to dance. As a result Gaṅgā also rested for sometime on the top of Meru. At that time the earth approached Gaṅgā and eulogized Her. On Gaṅgā's inquiring about her desired object, the earth requested Her to flow as four rivers on the surface of the earth and to purify Her own body. The king also supported the proposal of the earth, on hearing which Gaṅgā subdivided into three parts, and set out from heaven in the west, in the north and in the east, and followed the path of Bhagīratha in the southern direction. At the time Bhagīratha was leading Gaṅgā, Indra intervened and objected to his taking away the whole of the Gaṅgā on the earth and requested him to leave one fine current of it in heaven. Accordingly Gaṅgā was requested by Bhagīratha to leave Her one current in heaven. That current which remained in heaven is known as Mandākinī. Gaṅgā pierced the peak of the mountain by Her great speed and followed Bhagīratha.

Adhyaya - 69

Gaṅgā came out on the tenth day of the bright half of the month of Jyeṣṭha. Bathing, practising penance, alms giving in the Ganges are considered to be the givers of great reward and destroyers of great sin. Bhāgīrathī is believed to destroy the ten-fold sin accumulated within ten births by bathing, or plunging into its waters when the moon occupies the Hṛsta constellation on Tuesday. Gaṅgā after having crossed the impassible mountain Hema-Kūṭa came near Himālayas. Gaṅgā approached the head of Lord Śambhu at midday on the fifteenth of the month of Jyeṣṭha, and moved in His matted hair to and fro. Bhagīratha did not find Gaṅgā behind him and was worried. He heard the sound coming from the head of Śambhu and understood that Gaṅgā must be there. Gaṅgā could not find an outlet from the matted hair of Śambhu and remained therein for one year. Bhagīratha reminded Śiva about His boon for the release of his ancestors, and implored Him to drag Her out from His head. Lord Śiva advised him to wait till the tenth day of the bright fortnight of the month of Jyeṣṭha, when the moon would be in Hṛsta constellation on Tuesday. Gaṅgā resorted to Lord Mahādeva to get a way out from His matted hair. Thereupon Śambhu untied His matted hair by His left hand and allowed Gaṅgā to proceed in the southern direction. Menā and Himālaya approached near Her to see Her. Gaṅgā prostrated before Her parents and fell on the surface of the earth.

Adhyaya - 70

After reaching Haridvāra, Gaṅgā subdivided herself into seven streams and turned towards the south-eastern direction and joined with other rivers. At Prayāga Gaṅgā joined with Yamunā and Sarasvatī. Bathing at Prayāga practising penance and alms giving is extremely meritorious. Then Gaṅgā turned towards the eastern direction and thereafter towards the northern direction to see Lord Maheśvarā in Kāśī. Gaṅgā is most meritorious and the giver of salvation there. Gaṅgā bestows final release to him who knowingly or otherwise casts off his body there. Gaṅgā is difficult to attain in Haridvāra, Prayāga, and Gaṅgāsāgara Saṅgama. Gaṅgā over-flooded sage Jāhnu's Āśrama. Hence he drank the whole current. But Gaṅgā again came out from the thigh of Jāhnu and was called Jāhnavī. Jāhnu eulogized her. Thereafter Gaṅgā turned towards the eastern direction to see Kāmākhya. On Bhagīratha's reminding her about her mission, Gaṅgā followed his chariot and approached the sea.

Adhyaya - 71

On reaching the nether regions Gaṅgā rushed towards the place where the sons of Sāgara lay in the form of ashes, as directed by sage Kapila, and overflowed it. Consequently the sons of Sāgara attained divine form and went to Brahmaloka at once. One of Gaṅgā's pure streams continued to flow in the nether regions, and became known as Bhogavatī. Thus the holy Gaṅgā, formerly residing in the body of Viṣṇu, came on the

earth. Thereafter the result of the hearing of this holy descent of Gaṅgā on the earth is described. This hearing of Gaṅgāvetaraṇa creates great pleasure of the manes. He attains everything worth accomplishing who recites this anecdote with devotion and with self controlled mind on the eleventh day of a fortnight. The reciter of this anecdote on the full moon day or on the day of Sun's transit from one sign^{of} the zodiac to the other attains the fruit of performing an Aśvamedha Yajña.

Adhyaya - 72

Lord Mahādeva explained to Nārada the greatness of Gaṅgā in great details. In support of the splendour of Gaṅgā, God Śiva narrated an anecdote of a hunter called Sarvāntaka, who was born in the race of Śabarasa and who was the greatest sinner. King Citrasena shot an antelope that was pierced by the king's arrow and was tied by the hunter. The king on seeing it was enraged and tied the hunter with different nooses. While returning to his city, the king ascended a boat along with the antelope and the hunter. Thus the hunter saw the goddess Gaṅgā on account of connection. After reaching the city the king put the wicked hunter in a terrible prison. After sometime when the hunter died the messengers of yama tied him with their nooses and went away. But the messengers of Śiva came there and opposed them and after defeating them took him to the world of Lord Śiva. The defeated messengers of Yama, approached Yama and informed Him about the happening. On being asked by Yama Citragupta explained to Him about the hunter's vision of the

Ganges through contact that was the destroyer of great sins and the creator of merit. Thereupon Yama instructed His messengers not to consider the perpetrators of hundreds of sins as fit to be punished by Yama in case they have come to visualize Gaṅgā through contact. He also instructed them that those who meditate upon the liquid form of that goddess devoutly should be considered as not punishable by Yama even if they may be the performers of hundreds of sins.

Adhyaya - 73

The greatness and the efficacy of taking a bath in the Ganges are described in details. The bath in the Ganges is most auspicious when it is taken in keeping with the rites in the morning when the sun is either in Tulā, or Makara or Meṣa Rāśis. One is freed from transmigratory existence by taking a bath in the Ganges at the time of day-break on the seventh of the bright half of the month of Magha. If a person suffering from disease worships the sun on the bank of the Ganges on Magha Sukla Saptam he is freed from great diseases. By taking a bath in the waters of the Ganges in keeping with the rites on the full moon day, a man has his sins washed off and he attains sayujya with Lord Sambhu. The fruit of taking a bath in the Ganges on the full moon day of the month of Karttika is the destruction of great sins. The same fruit is attained by taking a bath in the Ganges on the thirteenth of the dark half of caitra. Moreover it is also mentioned that he will be the attainer of the summum bonum. Thereafter the efficacy of the performance of Śrāddha of the manes, after

bathing in the Ganges is described. One who performs initiatory rites (Purascarana) in Ganga is freed from sins and accomplished the sacred formula. Thereafter the greatness of the sacred place Kāśī is described.

Adhyaya - 74

The greatness of Gaṅgā is described further. A person abandoning his body knowingly in Gaṅgā attains final beatitude. Even a great sinner if he happens to abandon his body in Gaṅgā out of ignorance attains Sāyujya with Lord Śiva. There results final release in the water of Gaṅgā anywhere, while the same is attained in the water as well as on the earth in Vārāṇasi, whereas it is attained in the water on the earth as well as in the atmospheric regions at Gaṅgāsāgara saṅgama. Even if the flesh or bone of a person who dies elsewhere perchance comes into contact with the water of Jāhṇvī, he also would attain heaven. In support of this, the anecdote of a Vaiśya called Dhanādhipa is narrated, who was a great sinner engaged in (decoity) plunder and dalliance with wives of others. After death God Yama placed him in the hell called Asipatravana. The remainder of the flesh of his dead body was eaten by a vulture who came to Gaṅgā and drank the water in which the flesh of the dead body entered. As a result the sinner was freed from sins and after having attained a body resembling that of Lord Śaṅkara, went to heaven. Since death is inevitable one should solely and devoutly resort to Gaṅgā, if one desires

release. Gaṅgā is the closest relative, who is the giver of happiness and salvation by sight, by touch, by reciting Her names, and by meditating upon.

Adhyaya - 75

By way of a reply to Nārada's inquiry regarding the praiseworthy names of Gaṅgā, Lord Mahādeva narrated to him one hundred and eight best names of Jāhnavī out of a thousand names of Gaṅgā. The recitation of this collection of names leads to the fruit of bathing in the Ganges. The recitation of these names at the time of bathing in Gaṅgā, gives rise to the fruit of the performance of thousands of Aśvamedha yajñas. The recitation of these names on the fifth day of both the fortnights gives rise to the fruit of alms giving of ten thousand cows. The recitation of this after bathing in Gaṅgā, at the junction with the sea on the full moon day of Kārtika leads to the position of Lord Mahesā. Gaṅgā should be resorted to as one who is the highest Tīrtha, the accomplisher of all the objects of men, the power in the form of waters the uplifter of the people from calamities, the destroyer of nescience, and as the goddess who is the giver of Brahmevidyā. In case this meritorious anecdote is kept in black and white sin does not touch that region. Thereafter the fruit of hearing and reciting this Nāhātmya, on different occasions is mentioned.

Adhyaya - 76

Sage Nārada expressed his desire to listen to the splendour of the Tīrtha of Kāmarūpa in great details from Lord Śiva. According to Lord Śiva, in the Tīrtha of Kāmarūpa, the goddess Śivā, resides in person. There the Mahāmāyā, the greatest goddess self-sufficient and foremost remains in the form of female organ of generation, on the earth by Her sport for the benefit of the people. In order to visualize the Kāmākṣī form of the goddess, Lord Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Mahēśa formerly practised penance there. The sight of Kāmākhyā, is capable to burn in a moment, the mass of sins, accumulated by thousands of births. The region in this Bhāratākhaṇḍa is the destroyer of the sins of men by the felling of the limbs of Satī and hence it is very auspicious. There is no other Tīrtha equalling Kāmākhyā on the surface of the earth. Since that Lord Śambhu, who is the giver of salvation to men, in the region of Vārāṇasi, Himself desires freedom, after approaching the great goddess daily, there is no other place superior to that Rāma the son of Jambodāgni practised puraścaryā there with a desire to kill Kārtavīrya, Arjuna and attained the status of Viṣṇu. Only one who has accumulated great mass of merit in thousands of births formerly is able to visualize Kāmākhyā Tīrtha.

Adhyaya - 77

Sage Nārada, desired to know from Lord Śiva as to who out of the ten forms of the lore was the presiding deity of the great place of pilgrimage Kāmarūpa Śiva disclosed to him that Kāmākhyā was the foremost eternal goddess Kālī Herself. The

goddess Kāmākhyā is described as wearing red garment and possessing three terribly shining eyes, and four arms and terrible teeth and dark colour. Thereafter, there is the description of the nine other lores and their respective places in respect of Kāmākhyā. The three great gods along with other gods accompanied by their powers are always in proximity of that Pīṭha. The adoration of the goddess is recommended. The offering of a bilva patra to the goddess leads to the fulfillment of one's birth. It is insisted that one should put on the beads of Rudrākṣa even if one be a Śaiva, a Vaiṣṇava or a Śākta. The recitation of the Kavaca of the goddess is recommended for the accomplishment of the mantra. On Nārada's request Lord Śiva narrated to him the Kavaca of Kāmākhyā. Thereafter, there is the description of Aṅganyāsa. Thereafter the hearing of the fruit of this Kavaca is mentioned.

Adhyaya - 78

As narrated by Mahādeva, he who after having adored Candikā on the third day of Vaiśākha, repeats the highest mantra attains release. In the night on the fourteenth day of Māgha i.e. on Mahāśivarātrī day, if a person observing a fast adores Lord Śaṅkara in the night, Prshara-wise in that place of pilgrimage then he attains the merit equalling the performance of a hundred Aśvamedha Yajñas. The adoration of Lord Śiva with the leaf of bilva is considered to please Lord Śiva more than His adoration with heaps of jewels and rubies. It should be understood that Gaṅgā, Kāśī, Gayātirtha, Prayāga, Kurukṣetra,

Yamunā, Sarasvatī, Godāvarī, Narmadā and all other eminent Tīrthas remain in proximity of roots of bilva. Hence whatever rites pertaining to gods or manes are performed according to laid down ceremony at the root of bilva should be understood as inexhaustible in crores of births. Bathing in keeping with the rites in the Lauhitya (in the river Brahmaputra) on the eighth of the bright half of caitra and adoring the mother of the world by its waters with devotion, is considered to free a person from transmigratory existence. Offering libations to the manes with devotion, with the waters of Lauhitya in Yonipīṭha leads the manes to Brahmaloḥa, free from disease. Among the leaves, the Tulsī leaf (the holy basil) and bilva leaf are most auspicious. The Yonipīṭha is the best among all the Tīrthas.

Adhyaya - 79

Sage Nārada expressed his desire to hear from Lord Śiva, the wonderful splendour of Tulasī, of Rudrākṣa, of Śiva and of Śiva's worship. By way of a reply Lord Śiva informed him that Lord puruṣottama was of the form of the Tulsī plant. Tulasī always destroys the sins of man, by seeing, touching, reciting the name, by wearing and by giving. The merit of seeing Tulasī, equals that which is attained on seeing the god Gadādhara in Puruṣottama Kṣetra. Merely by the touch of the leaf of Tulasī, one is freed from all sorts of sins. The touch of Tulasī is release itself and is a vow also. One who

circumambulates Tulasī with devotion, actually circumambulates Lord Viṣṇu, Himself. Lord Janārdana rejoices accompanied by Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī in a forest of Tulasī. The place where Lord Viṣṇu remains there, Lord Rudra with Rudrākṣa and Lord Brahmā with Sēvitṛī also reside. The offering of Tulasī leaf to Lord Viṣṇu after taking a bath in the month of Vaiśākhya, Kārtika or Māgha gives rise to the multifold fruit. He who adores Lord Hari with the Tulasī leaves or flower stalks in Kārtika attain the fruit equalling giving of ten thousand cows as elms or equalling performing a hundred Vājapeya sacrifices. Since the holy basil is dear to Lord Viṣṇu as well as to the manes, and all the gods, and goddesses also, therefore its leaf should be utilized in the adoration of gods and manes. Thereafter, the splendour of the holy basil, the Dhātṛitree and bilva tree is described.

Adhyaya - 80

The wearing of Rudrākṣa beads is considered to destroy sins many and varied. It destroys the sin of Brahmicide as well as that arising from sexual enjoyment of another's woman. It was considered necessary to put on a Rudrākṣa bead, while adoring Lord Viṣṇu, Lord Śambhu, or the goddess. If a person performs a rite pertaining to the gods or manes without putting on Rudrākṣa bead, it becomes futile. One should not perform any rite either in Kāśī or in the Jānhevī Kṣetra or any other tīrtha without wearing Rudrākṣa. He who keeps a Rudrākṣa bead with one face in his house, is blessed permanently by steady

riches. He doesn't suffer from misfortune nor from untimely death who puts on Rudrākṣa in his neck or on his arm. The fruit of the recitation of the splendour of Rudrākṣa, at the root of bilva tree, or in Gaṅgā, or in Kurukṣetra, or in Kāśī, or at Setubandha or Gaṅgāsagarasamgama, on Śivarātrī day in proximity of Śiva destroys all sins.

Adhyaya - 81

Mahādeva describes the characteristic features of the Kali age, and ordains the adoration of Śivaliṅga made of mud by bilva leaves for attaining release of the highest type viz. Sāyujya. The adoration of Lord Śiva, must precede that of Viṣṇu or Śakti. The fruit of the adoration of Śivaliṅga is described in details. The adoration of Śiva, is the giver of highest merit. The adoration of Durgā, the recitation of the name of Rāma, and the hearing of His virtues, and wandering in the Tīrthas should be considered as the highest sin-destroyers. He who hears or recites with devotion this Māhātmya he attains release, after having enjoyed desired enjoyments.