

ESSENCE OF NARADA CHARITRA

Composed, compiled and edited by V.D.N. Rao, Former General Manager, India Trade Promotion Organization, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi, Ministry of Commerce , Govt. of India, now at Chennai

Other Scripts by the same Author:

Essence of Puranas:-

Maha Bhagavata, Vishnu Purana, Matsya Purana, Varaha Purana, Kurma Purana, Vamana Purana, Narada Purana, Padma Purana; Shiva Purana, Linga Purana, Skanda Purana, Markandeya Purana, Devi Bhagavata; Brahma Purana, Brahma Vaivarta Purana, Agni Purana, Bhavishya Purana, Nilamata Purana; Shri Kamakshi Vilasa

Dwadasha Divya Sahasranaama:

a) Devi Chaturvidha Sahasra naama: Lakshmi, Lalitha, Saraswati, Gayatri;

b) Chaturvidha Shiva Sahasra naama-Linga-Shiva-Brahma Puranas and Maha Bhagavata;

c) Trividha Vishnu and Yugala Radha-Krishna Sahasra naama-Padma-Skanda-Maha Bharata and Narada Purana.

Stotra Kavacha- A Shield of Prayers

Purana Saaraamsha

Select Stories from Puranas

Essence of Dharma Sindhu

Essence of Shiva Sahasra Lingarchana

Essence of Paraashara Smtiti

Essence of Pradhana Tirtha Mahima

Dharma Bindu

Essence of Upanishads : Brihadaranyaka , Katha, Tittiriya, Isha, Svetashwara of Yajur Veda- Chhandogya and Kena of Saama Veda-Atreya and Kausheetaki of Rig Veda-Mundaka, Mandukya and Prashna of Atharva Veda

‘Upanishad Saaraamsa’ (Quintessence of Upanishads)

Essence of Virat Parva of Maha Bharata

Essence of Bharat Yatra Smriti

Essence of Brahma Sutras*

Essence of Sankhya Parijnaana*

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PREFACE

In Hindu Mythology, Brahmarsi Narada occupies a pride of place. In Puranas one could find innumerable references about his multi-magnificent personality for his knowledge, tact, wit, profound common sense and timely interventions where ever tough situations arise and ready solutions, sometimes even unpalatable, are offered. But all kinds of puzzles are untied by him most eminently in the glorious framework of Dharma and Nyaya. The finesse of Narada's way out even in tough situations is attracted by the most ruthless evil practitioners of very high intensity. Could a Ravana but yield to the temptation of bringing Maha Deva's Atma Linga home in his Puja Mandir! Would Kamsa the unquestionable tyrant of Mathura be made to believe years ahead with a warning signal that a child even yet to be born as Krishna would ensure his death! Should a gullible boy Dhruva be emboldened to leave a Kingdom to forests in search of Narayana! Might a Devi Savitri have the courage to run after Yama Raja on a firm prophesy of untimely death of her husband and made Yama's own position compromising! Was Devi Satyabhama the zealous and beloved spouse of Lord Krishna as smitten by jealousy of Devi Rukmini was able to hatch a plan to weigh Krishna's body weight against the Kingdom's gold and jewellery in a sensitive balance and turn Krishna as Narada's slave, but for Devi Rukmini's intervention to place a Tulasi Leaf against the gold reserves! Was indeed Devi Satyabhama who longed for Parijata Tree from Swarga in her backyard helped Indra to terminate Narakasura in Krishna's company and be responsible for entire Bharata to observe 'Deepavali' year after year till date!

Such intelligent quotient coupled with eloquent knowledge is but a rudimentary component of Narada's renown! He defied no less than a Brahma whose instruction was to become a house holder to procreate progeny while he stood his ground firmly being ready for punishment to become a house holder again and again. This was backed up by his faith, devotion and total surrender to Narayana!

Understandably, even an insignificant scripiter of a series of some Puranas in a rather naïve manner is now tempted to attempt the ocean like personality of Narada, since the contentment of doing so, is far outweighed by my ability. Even the sketchy translations of the Puranas were encouraged by HH Vijayendra Saraswati of Kanchi Mutt and declared that such translations would be like Veda Pathana! It is recalled that he had literally read out the pages of the Essence of Narada Purana in our presence and even jibed at my expression that as a result of King Rukmangada's enforcement of a Law among his subjects to compulsorily observe Ekaadasha Vrata, the traffic of sinners to yamaloka dwindled and Lord Dharma Raja did not have a full job to do! He has even changed my sur name as of 'Puranas' with endearment ! His unflinching trust in me is perhaps undeserving of me even while facing many of his such assignments ahead!

It is a matter of pride and satisfaction to me as also to my family that a Tulasi leaf is placed on the Maha Sthana at Kanchi Mutt in the memory of the ever present 'Walking God' for his blessings us and one and all!

VDN Rao

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ESSENCE OF NARADA CHARITRA

Hiranyagarbha Purusha Pradhana, avyaktaatma swarupine,

Om namo Vaasudevaaya, shuddha jnaana swarupine/...

Anadi madhyaantam vriddhikshayamachyutam,

Pranatosmyamyanta sanaatanam sarva kaarana kaaranam/ (Vishnu Purana-Prahalada Charitra)

Introduction

Brahmarshi Narada is replete with references in Hindu Mythology; he is described in various Puranas as an *agent provocateur* in a dharmic way to mislead purposively the evil doer towards a rosy path and at the end either teach, correct and reform or totally destroy the evil at its termination. Thus Narada is a legendary bridge between excessive arrogance and selfishness on the one hand and a virtuous way of exemplary life on the other! In the normal parlour, the image of Narada reminds one of a singing bard carrying a musical string instrument named 'veena' in his arms, decorated with jasmine flowers on his wrists, neck, shoulders and head hairs, while jay walking on clouds as a 'trailoka sanchari' in the sky from one part of the Universe to another as a globe trotter. He is the Sage who anticipates with his uncanny foresight and seeks to avert impending dangers and more often than nought prevent even by creating and hastening critical situations to teach lessons to the wrong doers, thus save embarrassments and negative situations to the hapless; he does not spare any body, -be it human beings or even Gods - barring the Adi Deva Narayana, whose name is at the tip of his tongue every moment and by each and every utterance by his breath! Indeed he is the Celestial Messenger of Peace and Universal Togetherness. No wonder Narada is a synonym of *Kalaha priya* or mischief monger but he is a unique fund of knowledge, robust commonsense and uncanny wit and wisdom that shapes destinies of Beings in the Supreme Lord's Creation!

Brahma's Creation Process:

Brahma Vaivarta Purana describes Paramatma Krishna of Goloka manifested Tri Murthis viz. Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver and Sustainer and Shiva the Great Destroyer of the Universe. This process is as per 'Kaala Maana' or the cycle of Time which was again created by the Paramatma Krishna, and the Tri Murthis represent Satwa-Rajasa- Tamo gunas respectively. [Even Lord Brahma's Life Span is stated as restricted to two Maha Kalpas or a mind boggling 311040 crore human years, while Vishnu and Maheshwara are eternal. A human year is a day to Devas; Satya Yuga is stated to have a span of 4800 Deva Years; Treta Yuga 3600 such divine years; Dwapara Yuga 2400 years; Kali Yuga 1200 years; 12000 divine years make one Maha Yuga; 1000 Maha Yugas make one Kalpa or a day to Brahma and two Kalpas one day and night to Brahma; Brahma's life span is 100 Brahma Years or two Pararthas; one Maha Kalpa is half of Brahma's life span; Brahma's present age is now fifty years plus; that is how our daily prayer states: Dwiteeya Parthaey! One Maha Kalpa there are a mind-boggling 311040 crore of human years. We are now in the 28th Kaliyuga of the First Day of the First Year of Sweta Varaha Kalpa,

second Parartha in the reign of the Seventh Manu Vaivaswata. Kali Yuga is calculated to have commenced on 17th February 3102 BC of Julion Calendar. Each Manu rules for 71 Maha yugas. Brahma is 51 year old having lived for 155 trillion years. We are now in the Third Kalpa (Varaha Kalpa).]

Birth of Narada

Now the present reference of **Narada** is as per the creation process of the current two Maha Kalpas of the ongoing Brahma Deva's Life Time, the cycle of successive yugas and that of the **Human Avatara** of Lord Vishnu's dashavataras which was of Lord Krishna of Dwapara Yuga . Of the Tri Murthis so manifested were of Lord Vishnu of 'dashavataras' or of Ten Incarnations originated from Vaikuntha, Srishti Karta Brahma Deva of Satya Loka, Vishnu of Dashavatara or Ten Incarnations of Matsya-Kurma- Varaha- Vamana- Nrisimha - Parashu Rama- Rama- **Krishna**- Buddha- Kalki Fame and Shiva and the Destroyer of Kailasa. Of the relevant Tri- Murthis, the process of creation of the present Brahma Deva is recalled in detail: Brahma Deva took up the further Srishti of Eight principal Mountains viz. Sumeru, Kailasa, Malaya, Himalayas, Udayachal, Agasthyachal, Suvela and Gandhamadana; Seven Seas viz. Lavana, Ikshurasa, Sura, Ghrita, Dadhi, Ksheera, and Suswaadu; Seven Dwipas viz. Jambu Dwipa, Shaka Dwipa, Kusha Dwipa, Pluksha Dwipa, Kouncha Dwipa, Nyagrodha or Shalmali, and Pushkara Dwipa.; Eight Loka paalakas viz. Indra, Agni, Yama, Nirutthi, Varuna, Vayu, and Ishana atop Eight 'Shikharas' of Meru and Eight 'Puras'; Ananta Sesha Naga at the root of the Meru; Bhuloka, Bhuvraloka, Swarloka, Maharloka, Janaloka, Tapoloka and Satyaloka; on the highest peak of Meru Brahmaloaka is situated and there above the Dhruva loka. Underneath the Meru are Atala, Vitaala, Sutala, Talaatala, Mahatala, Pataala and Rasaatala. Thus the Sapta Dwipas, Sapta Swargas and Sapta Pataalas together constitute the *Brahmanda*. While Vaikuntha, Shivaloka and Goloka are stated to be constant, the rest is 'Kritrima'/'Anitya' (temporary). Meanwhile, Devi Savitri generated the immortal Vedas of Ruk-Yajur-Sama and Atharava as also 'Nyaya' (Justice) and 'Vyakarana' (Grammar), the various Shastras and the Thirty Divine 'Raagaas' (Musical compositions) including Kanakambari, Bhanumati, Manoranjani, Sindhu Bhairavi, Mayamaalava Goula, Malahari, Chakravaram, Haatakambati, Hindolam, Keeravaani, Kalahapriya, Kapi, Madhyamavati, Shivaranjani, Kamboji, Mohanam, Bilahari, Hamsadhvaini, Suddha Saveri, Naga Bharanam, Bhava Priya, Mohana Kalyani, Amrita Varshini, Rasika Priya, Kusumakaram etc. Savitri also created the Four Yugas of Satya, Treta, Dwapara and Kalaha Priya Kaliyuga; days, nights, weeks, Sandhyas (Evenings), Ushas (early mornings), months, Seasons, Tithis, Dandas, Kshanas; Pushti (health), medha (brain power), victory, six Krittikas, Yoga, Karana, Devasena the Chief of Matrikas. Savitri also produced from her breast-milk three Kalpas viz. Brahma, Padma and Vaaraaha; four Pralayas viz. Nitya, Naimitthika, Dwiparaartha and Prakrita, Kaala, Mrityu Kanya and Vyadhiganas. Later on **Brahma** continued his Srishti from his 'Prishta' (rear side) Adharma and Alakshmi; from his 'nabhi' (navel) Vishwakarma the Shilpa Guru, from his 'Balaparakrama' or prowess Eight Vaus; Manasa Putras (mind-born sons) Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana, Sanatkumaras; Swayambhu Manu and his wife Shatarupa the Administrator of the Universe; Eleven Rudras viz. Mahan, Mahatma, Matimaan, Bhishan, Bhayankar, Ritudwaja, Urthvakesha, Pingalaaksha, Ruchi, Shuchi and Kaalaagni Rudra. From Brahma's right ear came out Pulastya, left ear Pulaha, right eye Atri, left eye kratu, nosetip Arani, face Angira and Ruchi, from left side Bhrihu, right side Daksha, from Brahma's shadow came out Kardama, Panchashikha from his navel, from chest came out Odhu, **from Brahma's throat came Nadada**, shoulder Marichi, from neck Apaantaratama, from tongue Vasishtha, from lips Pracheta, from left belly came out Hamsa (Swan) and Yati from the right belly.

Brahma's directive to progeny besides Narada

Brahma Deva then ordered his progeny to take up the task of furthering their own descendants; Sanaka and the three other Kumars named Sanandana, Sanatana and Sanat Kumara were allowed to take up 'Tapasya' and **asked Narada to partake the process of Creation but the latter declined and there were exchanges of curses on this count.** However all others performed extensive Srishti. Maharshi Marichi created Kashyapa Prajapati. Atri Maha Muni rubbed his eyes and created Chandra Deva in the Ksheera Sagara. Pracheta Maharshi materialised Goutama from his mind. Mitra Varuna was the son of Pulastya's mind. Manu and Devi Rupa gave birth to three Pativrataas viz. Akruti, Devahuti and Prasuti. Manu and Shatarupa begot two illustrious sons called Priyavrata and Uttanapaada. Manu's daughter Akruti married Prajapati Ruchi and Prasuti was married to Daksha Prajapati. Uttanapada's son was the memorable Dhruva. Devahuti was wedded to Kardama Muni and their son was Kapila Muni. Daksha and Prasuti gave birth to sixty daughters of whom eight were married to Dharma, eleven were wedded to Ekadha Rudras, thirteen were given to Kashyapa, twenty seven were given to Chandra and one to Shiva Mahadeva. Now, Dharma's wives were Shanti, Pushti, Dhriti, Tushti, Kshama, Shraddha, Mati and Smriti; Shanti's son was Santosh, Pushti's son was Mahaan, Dhriti's son was Dhairya; Tushti's sons were Harsha and Darpa; Kshama's son was Sahishnu and Shraddha's son was Dharmik. Mati had a son Jnaan and Smriti had Jatismara. Dharma's first wife was Murti and their sons were Nara Narayana Rishis. Rudra's sons were Kala, Kalavati, Kaashthaa, Kaalika, Kalaha Priya, Kandali, Bhishana, Raastrea, Pramocha, Bhushana and Shuki. Kashyap's wives were Deva's mother Aditi, Dyatya's mother Diti, Sapra's (serpents) mother Kadru, Pakshi's (birds) mother Vinata, Surabhi was the mother of cows and buffalos, Saarameya was the mother of dogs, the rest of animals were born to Sarama and Danu was the mother of Danavas. Indra and Twelve Adityas [Amsa, Armayan, Bhaga, Dhriti, Mitra, Pusan, Sakra, Savitur, Twastur, Varuna, Vishnu, and Vivaswata as per Vishnu Purana] and Upendra (Vamana) and other Devatas were Aditi's children. Indra and Shachi Devi begot Jayanta. Surya Deva's wife (Vishwakarma's daughter) Savarna gave birth to sons Shanaischar and Yamaraja and Kalindi their daughter. Upendra and Prithi gave birth to Mangala Deva. From Diti and Kashyapa were born two greatest Daithyas Hiranyaaksha and Hiranya Kashipu, besides a daughter Simhika or Nirruti who gave birth to Saihikeya (Rahu). Hiranyaaksha had no children since he was terminated by Varaha Deva, but Hiranya-Kashipu had the memorable son Prahlada whose son Virochana gave birth to the famed Bali Chakravarti. Bali's son was Banasura the Yogi, Jnaani and Sevaka of Shankara. Kadru's vamsha had such impressive Sarpa's lineage of Ananta, vaasuki, Kaliya, Dhananjaya, Karkotaka, Takshaka, Padma, Iravata, Maha Padma, Shankhu, Shaankh, Samraran, Dhrita raashtra, Durdharsha, Durjaya, Durmukha, Bala, Goksha, Gokaamuka and Virupa. Of Kadru's daughter was Mansa Devi whose husband was Jaratkaaru born out of Bhagavan Narayana's 'Amsa'. Asteek was the son of these whose very name demolished the fear of Nagas! Vinata had two sons viz. Aruna and Garuda, both being as mighty as Vishnu and the entire race of birds emerged out of them. Chandra's wives-the daughters of Daksha-were the twenty seven Stars, of whom Rohini attracted him most and the other Stars complained to Daksha who gave a 'Shaap'to Chandra to become a leper; Chandra approached Shiva who cured him and kept Chandra on his head. As the daughters approached Daksha to return Chandra from Shankara, the latter declined as Chandra had already adorned his head. As Daksha was about to curse, Mahadeva approached Vishnu to save him from Daksha's curse; Shiva also pleaded that he was not prepared to leave Chandra as the latter sought Shiva's refuge; then Vishnu gave a special dispensation that half of Chandra would be returned to Daksha and his daughters and the other half would continue on Shankara's head. But the

halved-Chandra given to Daksha was not cured of the Raja-Yakshma disease as an impact of Daksha's original curse and Vishnu made a further dispensation that Chandra would grow day by day in his brightness from Padyami to Purnima and from the ensuing Padyami till Amavasya in the Krishna paksha his brightness would wane down. Such was the Srishti by Brahma by himself and that of the further process of Creation of his descendents subsequently.

Narada's defiance of Brahma's directive-Brahma and Narada's mutual curses

As Brahma allowed Sanaka Kumaras to carry on with their Tapasya and asked Narada to engage in 'Srishti' by becoming a house-holder, Narada's reaction was instant and said : would there be a fool who would leave the outstanding 'Amrit' like 'Seva' to Shri Krishna, instead of the poisonous drink of 'Samsara'(family life) which is hopeless, illusory and distressful? As Narada dismissed Brahma's proposal of Samsara with the least respect and consideration, the latter grew furious and visibly angry. He cursed Narada to become a quixotic, glibly and dreamy human being named 'Upabarhana' with frivolous nature, as an indulger in 'Shringar' (romance) and music, a veena player, talkative, wanderer and as the son of a servant maid; after repeated births would by the grace of Shri Krishna return to Brahma when he would then become a Gyani. Narada was non-plussed by this spate of curses and said: Your anger was least justified and unwarranted; normally, a father would chastise a son taken to wrong ways but in this case, many curses were hurled to a person with passion for the highest attachment and devotion for Shri Krishna! In the series of births that you asked me to go through, do kindly grant me the boon of not leaving dedication to Shri Krishna; do also kindly accord me the advantage of memory of previous births:

*Jaatismaro Harey bhaktiyuktah shukarayenishu, Janirlabheth sa prasavee Golokam yaati karmanaa/
Govinda charanaambhoja bhakti maadhveeka-meepsitam, Pibataam Vaishnavaadinaam sprashapootaa
Vasundharaa/ Teerthaani sparshamicchanti Vaishnavaanaam Pitaamaha, Paapaanaam Paapa
datthaanam Kshaalanaayaatmanaamapi/*

(Those who do not retain the memories of devotion to Shri Krishna would be worse than taking the birth of a pig; the preservation of such memories would however ensure the concerned persons to attain Goloka. Those who are attuned to enjoying the sweet drinks of Shri Krishna's sacred feet do indeed turn the entire Prithvi as sacrosanct. As sinners add to the sins of the Tirthas in which they bathe, such sins too get washed out offsetting the mere touch of Vaishnava Mahatmas!) Thus obtaining the blessing of 'Jatimara' or the memory of previous births from Brahma to enable him Narada to continue his devotion to Shri Krishna, Narada addressed Brahma Deva as follows: 'Chaturaanana! You have given me so many curses without justification for the only reason of not obeying you to distance myself from Paramatma and get into the whirlpool of Samsara! I feel justified to give you too a few curses: You will not be worshipped by anybody in the entire Universe by way of Stotra, Kavacha, Mantra and Puja for the next Three Kalpas; nor could be offered 'Yagna Bhaga'(oblations at Yagnas through Agni Homas); You will also be denied worship by way of 'Vratas'

Narada reborn as Gandharva, his Yogic death and further births

Pursuant to Brahma's curse to Narada, the latter was born as a Gandharva named Upabarhana. King of Gandharva had no son and meditated Shiva for many years by Stotra, Kavacha and Dwadashaakshara Mantra taught to him by Sage Vasishta. Shiva appeared before the Gandharva King who desired to have a son who would be a steadfast devotee and 'sewaka'(servant) of Shri Krishna; Shiva gave him the choice

to the Gandharva of securing Indratwa, Amaratwa or even Brahmatma instead of the boon to obtain a son who would be a mere servant of Shri Krishna. The Gandharva said that not only he did not prefer Indratwa, Brahmatwa etc. but wished for the boon of becoming a servant of Shri Krishna and not even Sayujya (absorption) with Shri Krishna! He insisted: *Saalokyasaashti Saameepya Sayujyam Shriharerapi, tatra nirvana mokshamcha Na hi vaancchhanti Vaishnavaah/* (TrueVaishnavas do not even aspire for Shri Krishna's Salokya, Saashti, Saameepya, Saayujya and Nirvana Moksha), but prefer to secure the 'daasya'/servantship of the Lord, while sleeping, being conscious, and at all the times; thus he requested for such a son who would be a close servant of Srihari; however the boy to be born should be long-lived, well-behaved, ever youthful, a Gyani, extremely handsome, Guru Bhakta and Jitendriya or with of the gift of mastery of Physical aspirations. As the King of Gandharvas was blessed with a son of such qualifications, Sage Vasishtha named the child as 'Upa' or added and 'Barhan' or devotion. As he grew up, Upabarhana commenced Tapasya. Another Gandharva King Chitraratha had fifty daughters and Upabarhana married them all and was happy. But, meanwhile he visited Brahma once and Upabarhana got infatuated with Apsara Rambha and noticing this indiscretion, Brahma asked him to take away his life in the Yoga way and told that he would be reborn as of Low Class and eventually regain his original position by virtue of his devotion as his son. Then immediately Upabarhan practised Yoga by breaking the six chakras of Muladhara, Swaadhistaana, Mulaadhaara, Manipura, Anahata, Vishuddha and Agjna; then commenced breaking the sixteen nadis viz. Ida, Sushmna, Medha, Pingala, Praanahaarini, Sarva gyana prada, Manah Samyamani, Vishuddha, Niruddha, Vayusanchaarini, Gyana jhrumbhana kaarini, Sarva praanahara, and Punarjeevana kaarini and further brought up Jeevaatma into Brahma Randhra and for two ghadis, aligned Atma into Paramatma. As Upabarhan got absorbed into Shri Krishna, the eldest of his fifty wives Devi Malavati, a 'Maha Pativrata' and the most beloved and highly dedicated person was uncontrollable with anguish, astonishment and anger too at the curse given by Brahma Deva at the flimsiest cause of a momentary and remote desire for an Apsara which did not call for a death sentence and a rebirth as as a Shudra! Malavati as a Maha Pativrata was indeed aware of the happenings and got prepared to curse not only Brahma, but the Trimurtis! She shouted with rightful indignation at Krishna Paramatma and complained to him at the untimely death of her husband; she conveyed her wounded feelings to Vishnu, Brahma, Maha Deva, Dharma and all the Powers that be! Meanwhile all Devas heard a Celestial Voice (Akaashaavaani) that indeed the self-esteem of a hurt Pativrata ought to be pacified as soon as possible and as a response to that Voice perhaps, Vishnu as a Brahmana boy appeared before her and sought to moderate her feelings; the Pativrata said that if her husband did not return to life, she as a true Pativrata would immolate herself and the entire 'Deva Samuha' would be responsible for the unwarranted death of a woman, that too a Pativrata! The Brahmana boy had to perform the delicate task of avoiding a curse to Tri Murtis by a Sadhwi and of vindicating the position of Brahma due to whose curse the Gandharva youth lost his life. The boy enquired of Malavati about the possible reasons for her husband's death: whether he had any illness; if so he knew how to treat all kinds of diseases by Ayurveda; whether she would like to call any Devata with possible responsibility of Death; if so, he could line up the relevant Devatas before her! Whether her husband died on account of Yoga practice; if so, he knew what Yoga was all about! 'Believe me Devi: I will definitely do my best to bring your husband back to life!' The confident manner in which the Brahmana boy talked to her gave conviction to her that this boy might perhaps revive her husband! The boy then called up a Meeting of 'Vedavettas' with knowledge of Vedas and first invited *Mrityu Kanya* of black complexion wearing red attire with six hands and looking frightful; then came *Kaala Deva* who was of black colour with ferocious nature with six feet, six faces, sixteen hands and twenty four eyes; then arrived *Yama Dharma Raja*. Malavika questioned Yama as to

how he took her husband away even when his death was perhaps not due! Yama repied that he had not taken her husband away since his life was not over. Mrityu Kanya and Kaal Deva too gave similar replies and denied their involvement in the death of Upabarhana. Then the Brahmana boy referred to Vaidya Samhita and said that besides the Four Vedas of Ruk-Yajur-Sama and Athrarvana, the Panchama Veda viz. *Ayur Veda* was handed over by Prajapati to Surya Deva who made an independent Samhita and passed it down to his disciples, who in turn made their own Samhitas or interpretations. Such Ayur Veda Vidwaans were sixteen in number: Dhanvantari, Kashi raj, Divodas, two Ashvini Kumars, Nakula, Sahadeva, Yama, Chyavana, Janaka, Budha, Jaabaala, Jaajali, Pila, Karatha and Agastya. Dhanvantari scripted Chikitsa Tatwa Vigyana; Deodas wrote Chikitsa Darpan; Kashi Raja made Chikitsa Kaumudi; Ashvini Kumars presented Chikitsa Saara Tantra; Nakul made Vaidyaa Sarvaswa; Sahadeva made Vyadhi Sindhu Vimardhan; Yama Raja scripted ‘Jnaanarnava’ and so on. Severe fever was the root cause of various illnesses; Bhasmas were their ‘Astras’ to control these diseases and Rudra was their Devata. Madagni was their father-figure in three forms viz. ‘Vaata’, ‘Pitta’ and ‘Kapha’. Ground coriander seed powder and sugar with water reduces Pitta (bile); also, all kinds of ‘Daals /Pulses, ‘Pancha Gavya material’ or cow milk, ghee, curd, dung and urine; ripe ‘bel’ fruit, ‘taal’ fruit, ginger and moong daal (green gram) juice and sugar-sesame seed churna / mix are the prescribed material for reduction of ‘Pittha’. Kapha increases by taking bath soon after food; drinking water without thirst; smearing til oil all over the body; consumption of Snightha (palm- grove oil) and Amla oil, eating spoilt meal, curd, drinking rain water, Sugar-sherbats, coconut water; eating ripe tarbuja, ‘Kakdi rasa, eating kakdi and bathing in open water-bodies in rains. But eating dried and fried food items, walking a lot, sweating out, eating unripe plantains, ground jeera, red chillis, cloves, fasting, drinking less water, ghee and dried sugar mix, black pepper, dried ginger and honey would kill kapha. ‘Vaata prakopa’ deeds (Vayu-based) are walking after meals, running, too much of movement and mating, worrying a lot, quarelling, fasting, experencing fear etc. tend to increase gas. Remedies against producing gas are eating ripe plantains, lemon juice with sugar, coconut water, freshly fried food items, cold water, til oil, coconut, Khajur, and dried fruits. As Upabarhana was a normal and healthy youth as confirmed by Devi Malavati, the cause of illness or diseases was also ruled out and hence it became clear that the untimely death of Upabarhana was not due to an act of Mrityu Kanya, or Kaala or Yama Raja as per their own confessions. The only possibility was due to Upabarhana’s own making, apparently by the Yoga way on his own volition. Having thus been convinced by the Brahamana boy who disproved the allegations of Devi Malavati that Devatas and Trimurtis were responsible for the death of Upabarhana, she became immediately defensive. The Brahmana boy emphasised that Malavati was indeed a Great Pativrata and gained considerable ‘Punya’ on that score; also Upabarhana was a known devotee of Shi Krishna including his previous births, but seeds of great deeds by her as a Pativrata and her husband as as an undisputed record of Bhakti would have to grow into a fruit-yieliding tree and that it would take time to assess the totality of the accounts of pluses and minuses on account of ‘Praarabdha’, ‘Sanchita’ and the ongoing ‘karmas.’ The Brahmana boy who finally vindicated the Truth appeared in his real position as Vishnu. Brahma approached the dead body of Upabarhana and sprinkled water from his ‘Kamandalu’/vessel; Shiva then bestowed ‘Jnaana Swarupa’ to the Gandharva, Dharma Deva provided Dharma Gyan and the Brahmana / Vishnu revived him fnally. Agni kindled jatharaagni or the digestive fire within; Kama Deva gave back all his desires and aspirations; Vayu gave back his breathing; Surya Deva restored eyesight; Vani Devi gave back the power of speech and Shri Devi accorded glow of his countenance. Brahma asked Malavati to bathe her husband quickly and new clothes. The highly blissful Malavati knew no bounds of joy as her dearest husband came back to life. Gandharvaloka was a happening Place in the Universe where the Tri Murtis and all the

Devas descended down there. The Gandharva Nagari which was heretofore plunged into darkness and tragedy sprang back to relief and vigour with the revival of the life of Gandharva Prince. There were grand celebrations with music and dance, song and gaiety and thanks-giving and total dedication to Shri Krishna.

Narada's Darshan of Maha Deva and Nara Narayana

As Brahma was pleased that finally his 'Maanasa Putra' Narada agreed to marry as per his wish, he gave the Upadesha of Krishna Kavacha and Shiva Kavacha as above and recommended that Narada visited Maha Deva and Narayana to sensitise him about the Principles of 'Ashrama Dharmas' with special reference of 'Garhastya', virtues of life, Bhakti, significance of Devas and Devis, the ways of worship and the ways and means of attaining 'Mukti'/ realisation of Shri Krishna. Brahma suggested to Narada to first visit *Shivaloka* situated one lakh yojanas above Dhruva loka for Shiva Darshan. Spread over an area of a lakh yojanas, Shiva loka was such that Vishwakarma the Architect and Builder of Devas could ever have dreamt of where crores of Siddhas and Shiva-Parshadas resided, where lakhs of Bhairavas stayed, where lakhs of Kshetras and palaces existed, and where there was no fear, death, disease, old age, and any kind of difficulty. Narada witnessed a breath-taking platform lit up with Five Moons in the midst of which Bhagavan was visioned with a Profile of dazzling illumination of pure white complexion and Five faces with 'Jataajut' adorned by half moons, Ganga on the head, blue throat, with moving and hissing snakes around his neck and shoulders, sporting a Trishula, a Damaru, and a 'Rudrakshamaala' rotated by his soft fingers with the name of Shri Krishna on the tips of his red lips with a highly pleasant visage and a capturing smile. He was surrounded by Yogendras, Siddhendras and Munindras. As Narada came near Mahadeva, he recited the Shiva Stuti and Kavacha and prostrated before him. Maha Deva knew the purpose of Narada's visit to seek replies on several questions such as Brahmana's '**Ahnika Achara**' / Nitya Karmas (daily deeds) and Paramatma Swarupa Nirnaya. Maha Deva described the daily routine by waking up at the Brahma Muhurta and introspect the 'Brahma Randhra' or the tiny, pure, and undisturbed mental-lotus without any features or inhibitions and concentrate on the Parabrahma Swarupa as prompted by one's own Guru (Mentor) and meditate that Guru who was indeed Brahma, Vishnu, Maheswara, Adya Prakriti Durga Devi, Chandra-Surya-Agni-Varuna-Vayu and so on. After the morning ablutions, the Brahmana would take his 'Snaan' while doing 'Mrittika Lopana' for Shuddhi of one's own body by reciting the Stanza : *Ashwa kraantey Rathakraantey Vishnu kraantey Vasundharey, Mritthi ke hara me paapam yanmayaa dushkrutam krutam/* (Bhu Devi! On your sacred physique many horses speed up, several chariots passby and Vishnu rolls off his feet during his playful 'Avataraas'; let all the sins that are committed over you be absorbed by you Devi!) Then while taking bath, one should recite: *Gangecha Yamunaachaiva Godaavari Saraswati, Narmadaa Sindhu Kaaveri jalosmin sannithim kuru/* (Hey Gangey, Yamuney, Godaavari, Saraswati, Narmada, Sindhu, Kaveri! You are all requested to be kindly xist in these waters with which I take my bath with devotion!). Then all the other Deities are remembered such as Nandini, Sita, Malini, Mahapathaa, as well as the Rivers which originated from Vishnu Deva's feet such as Ganga, Padmavati, Bhogavati, Swararekha, Kaushiki, besides Prithivi, Shubhaga, Viswakaya, Shivaamrita, Viswakaaya, Shivaamriti, Vidyadhari, Suprasanna, Lokaprasaadhini, Kshema, Vaishnavi, Shantida, Gomati, Sati, Savitri, Tulasi, Durga, Mahalakshmi, Saraswati, Radhika, Lopamudra, Diti, Rati, Ahalya, Aditi, Sangjna, Swadha, Swaha, Arundhati, Shatarupa and Devahuti. Then 'tilak' should be applied on the corners of hands, forehead, neck and chest, otherwise all the other deeds like Snaana, Daana, Tapa, Homa, Deva Yagna and Pitru Yagna are all stated to be useless! After being seated on an 'Asaana', a devotee is to worship Shalagrama shila, Mani or Pratima with water and Mantra. The nomal sixteen services offered in the worship are Aasana, Vastra, Arghya, Paadya, Achamaneeya, Pushpa, Chandana, Dhupa, Deepa, Naivedya, Gandha, Maalya, Shayya, Jala, Anna and Tambula along with Mula Mantras. Vaishnavaites

practise the procedure of first performing Bhuta shuddhi, followed by Anganyasa, Pratyanganyasa, Mantra nyasa and Varanyasa. A Kurma Deva should be set in a pre-made Trikona Mandala and purify the Mandala with the sacred water invited from various rivers; then the above prescribed seervices are dedicated in seriatim. Visarjana, Deva puja with Agni homa and 'Bali'/ sacrifice to Dikpalakas constitute a parcel of the 'Ahnika Karma' or the daily procedure of an ideal Brahmana. The second query of Narada to Maha Deva related to 'Ahara Niyamas' or Food material approved or otherwise. Any kind of food items offered as 'Naivedya' to a Deity or 'Havishya' offered as 'Agni homa' are the most appropriate. Conversely, food consumed without offering to Bhagavan is as impure as poison or excreta. Further, Brahmana should observe fast on every Ekadashi day and must not take food. On Krishna Janmaashtami, Shri Rama Navami and Shiva Rathri particularly, non-observance of fast entails double offense. Only exceptions who cannot observe the fast on the prescribed days might be those who are extremely diseased, badly ill and women in advanced stage of confinement or during the periods of menses. Even in respect of such exceptions, fruits and roots and milk/water might be consumed. In any case, those who can certainly not take food have to clear their own respective conscience and scruples. Even as a daily routine, only that food which is offered to Bhagavan and thus becomes 'Prashad' must be eaten the best. As regards the food items which are prohibited the following regulations would apply: consumption of milk in a copper vessel, eating food / water that is already part-eaten or drunk by another person, drinking salted milk, or eating brinjal in Kartika month and pumpkin in Chaitra month must be avoided since it would lead to monetary loss; eating small specie of brinjal on dwiteeya day must be avoded; eating 'Parwal' (little gourd) vegetable helps opposition forces. Consuming 'Muli' (radish) on chaturthi day is prohibited as it might adversely affect availability of ready cash. On Panchami, eating of 'bel' items should be avoided. Consuming neem leaves on Shashthi day is taking like poison; on Saptami, consumption of 'tada' fruit is like inviting illness; eating any product of coconut is eroding one's thinking capacity; 'loki' (bottle gourd) and kalambi vegetable must be avoided on Ashtami and Navami days respectively; on Dashami, Dwadashi and Trayodashi 'Shimbi' / 'Sem' (cluster beans)), Putika /Poi and Brinjal must be avoided respectively. Eating meat ought to be avoided any time. Usage of oil and 'Stree Sahavas' should be avoided on Amavasya, Purnima, Sankranti, Chaturdhashi, and Ashtami as also on Sundays, Vrata days, and Shraddha days. Eating curds in nights, sleeping during day time and Sunrise-Sun set times and eating food of a woman in menses ought to be avoided. Shaving / haircut in Kritika star time and on Amavasya days should be avoided. Having described 'Ahnika Achara' and 'Bhakhshabhaksha Vidhi', Maha Deva briefly defined Para brahma Swarupa to Brahmarshi Narada. Parabrahma is present in all Beings with 'Pancha Pranaas' (Vital Aairs) viz. Prana-Apana-Vyana-Udana-Samana illuminated in the Supreme Form of Paramatma. He said that in the form of complete Gyan, he was present and Prakriti was as Shakti or Iswarini. Just as Surya or Chandrama get reflected in the water kept on pots, any Being is the reflection of the Supreme Force and the moment the pot is broken, the reflection disappears too; this is how Jeevatma is the reflection of Paramatma getting dissolved into the latter. At the very end, there is only one Paramatma that remains on the Form of 'Mandalaakara Jyoti'- a circular globe of extraordinary radiance akin to crores of Suryas and exists like the never-ending Sky ans as an 'Avinaashi' (Ever Existent). Yogis refer that *Unknown* as Sarwa Swarupa Paramatma who is *Nireeha, Niraakaara and Nirguna*. That Supreme is like the Shakti of Thirst in Agni, radiance and heat in Surya, whiteness in milk, colness in water, sound from the Sky and Sugandha from Prithvi. It is that Highest Energy with the interaction of 'Chhaayaarupini Maya', like the proverbial 'Kumhara' (potter) moulds the 'Mitti' /earth and creates myriad forms of 'Chaarachara'/ animate and inanimate beings. It is that Shri Krishna whom Vaishnavites worship as 'Saakara' assuming a unique and resplendent Form in a typical circular fund of illumination called 'Goloka Dhaam' which neither has an axis nor a support, which is as wide as a lakh crore yojanas-unimaginable that is-full of Gopanganas, Gopaas and Gomataas, where there are countless Kalpavrikshaas, Kamadhenus, and invaluable golden buildings studded with diamonds, gems and precious stones among which there was a mammoth and an unmistakably distinct Palace where a teen aged boy of

cloud-coloured Physique, with the dazzle of crores of Suryas of brilliance and an equal number of Chandras with amazing coolness is present, with a golden headgear of outstanding shine with a peacock feather, golden hand wrists bangles, ear rings, arms and shoulders all studded with Nine Gems in molten like gold, the most renowned 'Kaustubh Mani' on his chest, the ever enchanting flute in his hands, an alluring smile on his red lips hiding pearl like teeth comparable to thousands of Manmathas. On his lap is Devi Radha who is surrounded by Brahma, Vishnu, Maheswara, Dharma and Ananta; Sanaka brothers and illustrious Maharshis, and Gopa-Gopis. This Adi-Purusha Paramatma Shri Krishna literally denotes: **Krish** meaning Totality and **Na** denotes 'Atma' or Soul. As Bhagavan Shiva delineated Shri Krishna thus, Narada repeated the Stotra by which Gandharva Raja Upaharna extolled Shri Krishna as also Bhagavan Shiva and took leave of the latter to approach Nara Narayana and proceeded to 'Narayanaashrama' at Badari Tirtha.

Narayana Maharshi described Shri Krishna as that Supreme Power whom Ganesha, Vishnu, Shiva, Rudra, Sesha Deva, Brahma and other Devas, Manus, Muniganas, Saraswati, Parvati, Ganga Devi, Lakshmi and all other Devis worship his feet always. Maharshi Narayana portrayed Shri Krishna who lifted Govardhana Giri by his little finger and saved Vraja bhumi from the wrath of Indra Deva; who lifted the whole Prithvi as she was sinking into the deep worlds under the huge pull of waters and saved her by his mere tusks; who was the naughty honey- bee seeking to tease the sweetness of the faces of 'Gopanganas'; who by his mere fall of an eye-lash the Creator of the Universe Brahma would become a casualty; and who as a tortoise that bore the weight of Sesha Nag at the time of 'Samudra Mathana' like an elephant to a mosquito. Maharsh Narayana further depicted Devi Radha as the **Prakriti**, the secondary Prakriti is Lakshmi, the tertiary Prakriti is Saraswati, the fourth is Veda Mata Savitri, and the fifth Prakriti is Durga whose son is the unforgettable Ganesha. (Brahma Vaivarta Purana)

Daksha Prajapati's curse to Narada to become a woman

Prajapati Daksha during his rebirth pursuant to Shiva's pardon after Devi Sati's self immolation, offered prayers to Superior Lord to purify his thoughts at a place known as Aghamarsana near a mountain in Vindhya Range. The Supreme Lord was pleased and appeared before him. The Lord instructed to lead a family life and carry on his normal duties. Accordingly, Daksha married Prajapati Panchajana's daughter Aksini and begot ten thousand sons named Haryasvas. As instructed by their father Daksha, Haryasvas decided to perform austerities to beget children and reached a place named Narayanasaras, where River Sindhu joins the Sea. Narada appeared there and mind-washed them about the futility of begetting progeny and getting involved with family lives and the perennial problems; he advised that the real purpose of a useful life would be to follow the path of God-consciousness instead. Narada gave the Theory of Creation and destruction- the chain of births and deaths, and the futility of pursuing such a life. Haryasvas were sincere and obedient children of Daksha, but the mind-setting of Narada was so convincing that they followed the short-cut spiritual way rather than the circuitous and too familiar family route to God. Daksha lamented that his progeny opted a different route and Brhama consoled him and belssed Daksha to beget another thousand sons named Savalasvas, who too went the Narada way, since the latter was also able to convince as he did to their brothers. Being furious at what had been done by Narada to his sons, Daksha cursed Narada that henceforth the latter would be a globe trotter and would never be settled and static, much less as a family person. Narada in turn could have given a curse to Daksha but restrained in the interest of the next generation to observe the Grihasti's life's route to salvation.

Episodes of Narada's experiences of Vishnu Maya

Narada Maharshi and Veda Vyasa exchanged their own experiences about the play of 'Maha Maya' or 'Prakriti' (The Great Illusion) in the Hermitage of Vyasa on the banks of River Saraswati. Vyasa narrated in passing about the incidents relevant to his family as to how his father was enticed with his mother viz. Parashara Maharshi and Satyavati a fisher woman; how his mother Satyavati insisted to sleep with his dead younger brother to beget children to uphold the family royalty; how he himself got tempted with an Apsara called Ghritachi and gave birth to Suka Muni; how intensely he loved his son and wanted him to become a house holder; how frustrated was he till Janaka as 'Videha' (Body-less) was able to become a Grihasti; how elated that he felt when finally his son agreed to be a Grihasti and finally how distraught his son attained Salvation!

It was then the turn of Narada to narrate his autobiography and how Maha Maya had influenced his own life. Narada ('Nara' stands for knowledge and 'Da' stands for Giver or Provider) is popular as a 'Loka Sanchari' or a Universal Tourist. He is also popular as 'Kalaha Priya' or as an instigator but his end-objective would always be for 'Loka Kalyana' or for Universal Benefit. Even at the time of generation as a Manasika Putra or Mind-Born son of Brahma, Narada was engulfed with Maya as Brahma asked the son to become a house-holder and procreate progeny but Narada refused flatly; he said : would there be a fool to leave the outstanding nectar of service to Krishna and take to the drink of poison called Samsara! Brahma was terribly disappointed and visibly angry especially since the earlier brothers of Narada viz. Sanaka-Sanandana-Sanatana and Sanat Kumaras also politely refused to become 'Grihasties' and Narada's reaction was more assertive disregard of his consideration to a father! Brahma then cursed Narada to become a yogi; a quixotic, glibly and dreamy person with frivolous nature; as an indulger in 'Shringar' (Romance) and Music; a Veena Player, a talkative wanderer; as the son of a servant maid, and after repeated births finally he would return to Brahma and become a Supreme Gyani! Narada was taken aback by such lashing of curses from Brahma and having requested the father to bless him to be a Jatismara or with memory of previous births and a staunch devotee of Narayana, gave a return curse to Brahma too that he would not be worshipped in the entire Universe by way of Srotra, Kavacha, Mantra, Puja, Vrata or Agni Homa for the next three Kalpas!

Narada was reborn as a Gandharva Prince named Upabarhana -literally meaning as one with Devotion. He was married to fifty daughters of another Gandharva King and the eldest of his wives was Malavati an illustrious Pativrata. He however had a flimsy fancy for Rambha and for this indiscretion Brahma cursed him to terminate his life by the yogic of death; thus he practised Yoga by breaking Six Chakras (Muladhara, Swadhistana, Manipura, Anahata, Vishuddha and Agjna) and Sixteen Nadis (Ida, Sushumna, Medha, Pingala, Praanahaarini, Sarva Jnanaprada, Manah Samyamani, Vishuddha, Niruddha, Vayasancharini, Jnana jrumbarana karini, Sarva Pranahara and Punarjeevanakarini) and died the Yoga way! Malavati got furious that on a flimsy cause of fancying Rambha, Brahma gave the disproportionate penalty of death to Narada and protested to Devas and Tri Murtis that she would immolate in Homagni. Vishnu realised how powerful a curse of Maha Pativrata like Malavati could be and assumed the form of a Brahmana Vidyarthi enquiring of Malavati whether the death of her husband was due to physical nature and if so he could be revived by the means of Ayurved; or else if the death was due to Yoga, then too there would be ways of reviving him the Yoga way! As the death was due to Yoga, the Brahmana boy prayed to Agni and the jatharagini of the Gandharva was kindled; Kama Deva gave back to the latter's

desires and aspirations; Vayu gave back his breathing; Surya restored his eye-sight; Vani his power of speech; Dharma revived his Gyan and Brahma and Vishnu revived the Gandhrava Narada finally.

Another episode of Narada's life related to Daksha Prajapati's curse to him to become a Grihasti or a house holder as Narada instructed the Prajapati's progeny of Haryasvas to avoid Samsara or family life. Narada and a Devarshi Parvata undertook a journey to Bhuloka once and due to the 'chaturmaasa' of the rainy season halted at King Sanjaya as their valued guest. The King asked his unmarried daughter Damayanti to supervise the daily needs of the Rishis for their worship. In course of time Narada developed a fancy for Damayanti since their common interest was music. Indeed Narada was an expert *par excellence*. He had his own musical instrument and mastered the art of music, dance and the rest of the fine arts. Little wonder that Damayanti went into raptures in the company of Narada. Parvata Maharshi noticed visible change in Narada and the Princess and confronted Narada who confirmed his longing for the Princess. Parvata Maharshi got annoyed, cursed Narada to get a monkey face and left the Kingdom out of disgust. Meanwhile Damayanti- Narada romance prospered as both were lovers of music. Damayanti argued that Kinnaras had horse faces too but were music experts par excellence; having convinced her parents thus she married Narada. After a few years Parvata Maharshi paid a visit to the Kingdom and finding that Narada- Damayanti couple were happy, withdrew the curse of Narada's monkey face as the couple was happy. Such was the impact of Brahma's curse to Narada that he should be a Grihasti and no longer a Brahmachari.

Yet another Story of Narada was about his womanhood! Lord Vishnu and Narada were exchanging views about the impact of Maya and indirectly mentioned that he saved himself from it excepting that he was cursed by Brahma and Daksha and had problems. Vishnu asked for his vehicle Garuda and suggested to Narada to go for a drive across the sky. He stopped Garuda at the City of Kannauj and desired that he and Narada could refresh bathing in a Lake. Narada kept his clothes, Kamandalu, and Veena on the banks of the Lake and dipped first in the water. The moment he dipped and came out, Narada turned into a charming and youthful maiden not knowing his memory and identity. Vishnu quietly slipped out along with Narada's personal belongings and disappeared. Meanwhile, King of Kannauj arrived at the Lake for a swim and was overwhelmed with the outstanding beauty of the woman (Narada) and asked her antecedents; she did not know but he took her to his Capital and married her as per Vedic tradition and named her Sowbhagya Sundari. The King declared her as the Principal Queen and their marital life was a total success and gave birth to twelve sons. But as there was a terrible war all the sons were killed and the Queen and King reached a lake to observe the obsequies of the sons and the Queen too had a dip in the Sarovara and she emerged from the water as Narada! Such was the power of Maha Maya that Vishnu taught to Narada who learnt its impact the hard way! The Basic Laws prescribed by Maha Maya Bhagavati as enforced by the Trinity and their deputies and the actions are as per the mix of their Actions are performed as per their Gunas in various proportions as per their 'Prarabdha' or fate ! That was the lesson for Narada!

Vishnu Maya was also narrated in Bhavishya Purana: Yudhishtara asked Shri Krishna to elucidate on 'Vishnu Maya' or the delusion which human beings are often subjected to as they were unable to resist the temptations. Bhagavan Krishna replied that in the past Brahmarsi Narada too put a similar query and that he replied like-wise. He asked Narada to hold Krishna's little finger and follow what Krishna had to witness. There was an old Brahmana (Krishna himself!) called Yagna Sharma who had all the requisite accompaniments like a tuft, Yagnopaveeta, Kamandalu, Mriga charma or deer skin on which to seat,

Kusha grass on his fingers and reciting Vedas. Narada visited Jambu dwipa with the scene of Yagna Sharma. The Brahmana visited the banks of River Vedavati in Vidisha Nagar; there was a Vaishya called Seerabhadra and the Vaishya extended all courtesies to the Brahmana and politely invited him for lunch. Bhagavan Krishna in the disguise of the Brahmana smiled and blessed the Vaishya saying that his business and farm-work might flourish. From there both Krishna and Narada moved on to Veni Village on the banks of Ganges and met a very poor Brahmana called Goswami. Krishna in disguise along with Narada too in disguise told the Brahmana that they were coming to that Place from a very far off area and would like to be their guest for food, shelter and night halt. Next morning while leaving, Krishna told his host that let his farm not produce enough food and let his family not secure children!! Narada wondered that while Krishna did not accept the Vaishya's food, nor his home comfort, but still he blessed him to let his business and farming flourish; but in the case of the miserably poor Brahmana with no recourse to fall back still managed to make the guests fairly well but Bhavan Krishna instead of blessing him to let his farming flourish and so should his family, did not bless the Brahmana at all! Krishna replied to Narada that while the well-to-do Vaishya did not have to exert to provide excellent food and luxurious bed to sleep in, where as the poor Brahmana went out of the way to provide maximum possible adjustments; the Vaishya deserved a blessing for more prosperity but the poor Brahmana dereserved Mukti but not worldly gains!

Narada as an instrument of Lord Krishna teaching lessons against ego

A number of instances are cited when Lord Krishna taught lessons even to his own spouses. A popular story is related to the removal of conceit and envy of Devi Satyabhama, one of the most loved wives of the Lord. The latter had constant jealousy against Devi Rukmini, the prime queen of Lord Krishna, who had six other principal Queens besides them viz. Jambavati, Nagnajiti, Mitravinda, Lakshmana, Kalindi and Maadri. The one uppishness had however tormented Devi Satyabhama only. She had even kicked off the golden headgear of the Lord who at one stage when he was pressing her feet, most privately though. The scene was described in Maha Bhagavata Purana most eloquently that the Supreme Head of Lord Krishna which was most respected by the Devas headed by Brahma seated on a lotus flower was mercilessly kicked off by the Queen Satyabhama and indeed that would be the treatment meted out to the erring husbands! The immediate provocation was that pursuant to the visit to Indraloka, Indra gifted a highly fragrant and never fading flower yielding tree named Parijata, and the same was planted in the backyard of Devi Rukmini! Narada acted a cheeky role of fanning Satyabhama's psychology and provoked her against making amends to Krishna. Finally, Krishna agreed to a compromise solution that he would be agreeable to hold all rights on him in favour of Narada - apparently her secret ally - against her entire jewellery and gold in weighing balance and if she failed to less than that of Krishna's, Narada might own Krishna as a gesture of her defeat in the bet. The deal was struck and the entire gold and jewellery of the Kingdom weighed less than the body weight of Krishna. Narada who played a key role in the sale of Krishna had finally owned Krishna as a slave! The news got spread like wild fire all across the Kingdom about Satyabhama's bet and Narada's mischivious ownership of Krishna, Devi Rukmini entered the City Center where the deal was witnessed by one and all. She came to rescue and save the Lord- not by adding further weight to gold and jewellery but by just one leaf of Tulasi along with her sincere devotion and dedication to the Lord! Thus Narada taught a lesson to Devi Satyabhama and cured her jealousy to Devi Rukmini- who was Devi Lakshmi herself- by stressing the fact that pure devotion to the Lord is far superior to the riches of the Universe!

Seed of Satyabhama's envy sown by Narada led to Narakasura's destruction!

The excessive passion kindled by Narada in Devi Sathyabhama's psyche to possess Parijata Tree in her backyard enabled her an opportunity to accompany Lord Krishna to a battle field; that was in fulfillment of a standing boon of his kept still as a reserve. Narakasura tormented Indra and Deva ganas at the latter's request to Krishna to kill the demon. After the battle she desired to avail of the opportunity to ask Indra as a gift since the battle would certainly be won anyway! Krishna, accompanied by Satyabhama flew by Garuda to 'Pragjyotisha', Capital City of Bhaumasura [now in Assam] , surrounded by mountains and ramparts defended by fire, water and unmanned automatic weapons as also protected by 'Mura Pasha'- thousand miles-long deadly and sturdy wires as designed by Demon Mura. Krishna shattered the defence buttresses and blew His Panchajanya (Conch shell) with deadening reverberation as Demon Mura's frontal fortification was destroyed. When provoked, the Demon tossed his powerful club which was slashed by Krishna's Sudarsana Chakra into pieces and devastated Mura. Seven deadly sons of Mura, who had the knowledge of weapons as fully as their father, pounced in a group but Krishna's Supreme powers were no match and they too were cracked. Bhaumasura shot at his 'Shataghni'- the powerful disc with hundred blades- and later on with his mighty spear with which he defeated Indra too both of which proved futile. Finally Krishna gave His nod to Sudarsana Chakra (Wheel) to pull down the Demon and exterminate him. Thus Bhaumasura was sent to 'Naraka' and hence his ignominious title as Narakasura.

Indeed the end of the notorious Bhaumika Narakasura, the son of Bhumi (Earth) is celebrated as the date of the Moon fall day Amavasya in Kartika Month every year and the day of Lord Krishna and Devi Satyabhama victorious on the subsequent day as Deepavali or the Festival of Lights and Sky reverberating sounds with joy!

[Another version is that the Demon was arrowed down by Satyabhama herself, as he secured a blessing from Lord Brahma that only his mother Goddess of Earth (Bhumi) could kill him; Satyabhama was the reincarnation of Goddess Earth . It was at Indra's distress call that received Krishna's attention as Varuna's Royalty Insignia, a Mother- Figure Aditi's earrings, and 'Mani Parvata'(Mandara Mountain) where Demi-Gods reside were among the abominable acts of the Demon. As a gesture of good-will, Satyabhama's desire to transfer the 'Parijata' Tree (which emerged in the churning process of Ocean) to her garden from the Heaven was obliged by Indra. Krishna on His part released sixteen thousand royal maidens of Kings defeated by Bhaumasura and consented to marry them, in addition to the eight principal wives. Goddess Earth sought her apology for her son's sins and reiterated her own devotion to Krishna.

Narada the proactive agent of Dharma

Narada was a constant instrument of the Lord to teach lessons to erring human beings, demons and even Devas by preaching ways and means to enable acts of virtue, disable acts of vice, and practise the methodology of saving from patently wrong doings. Indeed he is not the kind of a Sage to sit aloof and seek one's own Salvation but strive hard *pro bono publico* or help the helpless, the over smart and the typical forces of evil! An example of the situation of helplessness is cited by the story of King **Chitraketu**, who had a son after long time but the jealous step mother killed the child secretly and the King was totally shaken up and decided to end his life. Just at the nick of time, Narada appeared and revived the dead body of the son by his yogic powers. Having come back to life, the son who was a 'jaatismara' or with the knowledge of previous births and deaths, told his father that he passed through innumerable cycles of life and death and had as many fathers and mothers like a coin passing from one

hand to another. Hence he would rather not be born again and be happy to discard his new body. By facing the body the King realised the Truth and requested Narada to very kindly instruct him as Narada taught him the *Namo Narayanaaya* Mantra.

Another such incident of pro-active nature of regulating Dharma was narrated in Skanda Maha Purana at the Sacred Place of Mahi Sagara Tirtha where he worshipped the idols of Purushottama and Bhattaditya for long. On attaining the divine vision of Maha Vishnu, Narada requested him to establish himself as Vaasu Deva and eversince the Tirtha came to be popular as Vasudeva Tirtha where several devotees throng to worship with fastings, prayers, bhajans, night long jaagarans and Japas with the mantra of Om Namō Narayanaaya on Kartika Shukla Ekadashi and offer charities on the next day. One of the highly devoted Brahmana named **Aitreya** excelled in his constant Japa of Dwadashakshara Mantra ‘Om Namō Bhagatēy Vasudevaya’ right from his childhood and never heeded his parents or relatives and neighbours, who had all thought that he was dumb. His mother was terribly upset, as her husband Manduka Muni married again and Aitreya’s brothers were not abnormal. One day, the mother threatened to kill herself as her son was always spending time in the temple; Aitreya smiled and explained to her at length about the futility of normal life with the routine matters like marriage, family, earning livelihood, begetting children, getting old, diseases and death. He also told her that he had the knowledge of his earlier birth as a Sudra and he approached a kind and Dharmatma Brahmana who taught him the Dwadasakshara Mantra and the awareness of Bhagavan Vishnu; that was why he looked to be a stupid and dumb person. In the course of the discussion, Vasudava appeared in full glory with four hands along with ornaments and arms like Shankham (Conchshell), Chakram (Wheel), Gada (Mace) etc. before Aitreya who was dumbfounded and confounded and having gradually recovered his senses made endless eulogies and asked for ‘Moksha’. Vasudeva replied that as he worshipped Him relentlessly, sincerely and selflessly at this Vasudeva Mandir of Mahi Sagara Kshetra, it would be called ‘Aghanaashan’ and asked him to continue the daily worship as in the past till his end and reach Vaikuntha after his normal death. His mother was proud of her son and his father joined the Aswamedha Yagna after the Darshan of Vasudeva. Aitreya explained to his parents: *Namasthasmai Bhagavatey Vishnuvetkunthamedhasey, Yanmayaamohitadhayo bhramanah Karma saagare/* (I salute Bhagavan Vishnu, as our minds are illusioned with ‘Maya Moha’ (obsession) and are aimless in this vast Ocean of Samsara). Sage Narada also performed the ‘Pratishtha’ (Consecration) of **Bhattaditya** (Sun God) who is ‘Prathyaksha saakshi’ or ready-evidence on the Skies who is all pervasive and omniscient. He is the holder of the Universe. Those who do not recognise His magnitude and prominence are blind and who do not worship Him or highly unintelligent; one could see Him, feel Him and recognise Him on a daily basis but not pray to Him and worship Him may be truly termed as ‘Atmadrohis’ or self-deceitful. Narada performed severe Tapasya for hundred years and requested Him to retain one of His ‘Amsas’ (Features) in the Bhattadithya Idol and bless those who worship Him especially on Sundays and recite his Ashtottaras. [Incidentally, Mahi Sagara Sangama Tirtha was declared by Lord Brahma as a Gupta Kshetra]

Yet another instance of guiding **King Chandraketu** by Narada was narrated in Maha Bhagavata Purana: During the narration King Parikshith raised a pertinent question as to how a demon like Vritrasura was considered a great devotee of Lord Narayana, despite the fact he created havoc in the Universe and tormented Indra and Demi-Gods, even being a Brahmana? To this Maha Muni Suta narrated a story given by Narada as given by Sage Veda Vyasa. There was a King named Chitraketu who was very benevolent and all his subjects were contented. He had a million wives-all attractive but barren and could not bear a child. Once Sage Angira happened to visit the King who received him with considerable attention and

reverence. As the Sage sat on the ground instead of the King's own throne, the King too sat on the ground and the Sage was pleased by the King's humility. The Sage performed a Sweet Rice Homam to bless the eldest wife of Chitraketu, Kritadyuti. In course of time they were blessed with a son. The King had endless joy and so did the entire Kingdom. But the other wives became too jealous and poisoned the child even when he did not grow many years. The King and Queen were overwhelmed with sorrow and became uncontrollable. Both Angira and Narada helped to console them. In fact, Narada by his mystic yoga power revived the child for a while who refused to recognise the Royal Couple as his parents. Narada thus exhorted the couple to get rid of the illusion of the child and the parents, and it was thus evident that once death takes place, the so-called sense of attachment ceases as well. Each species of the Lord's creation loses its identity and as per one's own till the actions of the destiny of an ensuing life begins either as a plant, a bird, an animal or a human being! Narada then blessed King Chitraketu with spiritual knowledge and taught the King about Brahma Samhita and **Narada Pancharatra**. Chitraketu performed most intense and intimate prayers to Lord Anantadeva for long and finally, the Lord was kind to have provided glimpses of Himself and the King attained fulfillment. Thereafter Chitraketu became the Head of Vidyadharas and began travelling in outer space. During his travels he had the chance of viewing Lord Siva and Mata Parvati in a congregation of Siddhas and holy Sages, when they were in an embrace as they are 'Ardha-Nareeswaras'. Chitraketu did a foolish giggle to view the scene, even as Parvati was noticing it. She was clearly offended and instantly gave a curse that Chitraketu would be a demon. But, Lord Siva explained that Chitraketu was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu and a sincere Vishnavite having absorbed the essence of Truth and Falsity and the concept of the Self and God, a rudiment of Dvaita or Dualism ie of a human and God. Basically God is one but the fine distinction made out is of a 'Bhakta' (Devotee) and Paramatma, instead of Advaita stating 'Aham Brahmasmi' or 'I am God'. The paths to Super Soul are equally proven, while interpretations might vary'. This indeed was the background of Chitraketu and **Vritraasura**, who was finally decimated by the Vajraayudha improvised by Maharshi Dadheechi's backbone which became famed as Indra's 'Mahaayudha'!

Bhakta Dhruva and Narada

Maha Bhagavata Purana explains Dhruva and his guidance from Narada: Dhruva, the son of Suniti, also tried to sit over his father's lap but Suruchi the second queen of King Uttanapaada -the son of Swayambhu Manu- pulled him down and admonished him severely. The father had implicitly supported Uttama the son of Suruchi. Suruchi's reprimand was rather severe as she said that Dhruva had no business to compete with Uttama as the latter was the heir-apparent, even if Dhruva were the elder son, he was disqualified to be the would-be- King. She taunted Dhruva that Suniti's son could never be the next King, since Dhruva was not Suruchi's son and if Dhruva were ever to dream then he had to better please Lord Narayana and perform severe penance to become Suruchi's son in Dhruva's next birth! These words of Suruchi and the unkind way of her vitriolic utterance had sharply wounded the young heart and mind of Dhruva. He left the Palace crying away hopelessly and met his mother Suniti. The latter consoled Dhruva and said that his father too treated her as a nobody and as such there was perhaps no other alternative for him to meditate Lord Narayana and please Him to reverse the situation. As the boy's self-pride was shattered and his stepmother's insinuating words were ringing in his ears, he had determined to take the plunge and really identified himself in the devotion of the Greatest and the Best. At this juncture, Narada appeared and tried to discourage Dhruva saying that even Illustrious Sages had failed in their pursuit to seek Almighty over their several lives and after all a boy like him would be only wasting his valuable life and regret eventually. But Dhruva did not relent, come what might. Narada was indeed impressed and provided guidance as to how the boy should take initial steps to assume the procedure. He asked Dhruva to

purify himself with the water of River Yamuna, enter Madhubana on the banks and perform breathing exercises, gradually follow the 'Ashtanga' Yoga and develop high concentration on each of the Body Parts of Virat Swarupa, and lift up his inner energies in full alignment with the Supreme Energy. Narada had subsequently taught Dhruva the process of conquering his hunger and thirst, anger and envy, avarice and desire, and gradual control of all material senses. He taught Dhruva the Parama Mantra, viz, *Namo Narayanaya Namaha*. In course of the intense concentration and alignment with 'Paramatma', Dhruva had discovered a 'Radiant Vision' and felt disturbed, and when his eyes were opened, there the 'Sakshatkar' or Actual Appearance of the Supreme Being was tangible. The Voice said that after the demise of his father, Dhruva would be the King, his cousin brother would be killed on a hunting exercise in a forest and his step mother would be deranged; Dhruva would rule for thirty six thousands of years as a just and noble King and finally reached the Sky as a pole star for ever, even above the Stars of Sapta Rishis! In his heart of hearts, Dhruva still got perturbed by the harsh words of Surichi which haunted his memory. He also had the feeling that whatever he was able to achieve in six months even Maharishis were perhaps not able to. But in course of time he realised that it was foolish on his part on account of both the counts, since it was the Supreme Lord who was the cause, action and the 'Doer'. As Dhruva's total realisation dawned, he got finally engrossed and prayed: as sourced from Vishnu Purana: 'Paramatma! Your varied forms are of Prithvi, Jala, Agni, Vaayu, Aakaasha, Manas, Buddhi, Ahamkaara, and Mula Prakriti. Parama Purusha! You are Shuddha, Sukshma, Sarvavyapaka and of such several such magnificent traits! May I seek refuge from Akhila Brahmanda Nayaka Shuddha Swarupaatma! as you are the controller of Prithivyaadi Pancha Bhutaas, Buddhyaadi Antahkaranagyata Gunaas and Sahasra Mastaka- Sahasra Netra – Sahasra Paada yuta Sanatana Purusha! You are the Bhuta- Vartamana-Bhavishya Jnaata ! You are the Virat-Swarat-Samraat and the Creator of Brahmaadi Devas. You are the Supreme Srashta of Swarupa Bhuta Brahmanda and its contents. You are the Origin of Ruk Yaju -Saama Vedas, Gayatyadi Chhandaas, You are the Srava Mriga- Pashu-Adi Sridhti-Karana! From your face were born Brahmanas, your shoulders and hands were materialised Kshatriyaas, Vaishyas from your thighs and others from your feet; from your eyes were produced Surya, Vaayu from your breathing, Chandra from your mind, Life to all Beings from your nose, Agni from your face, Aakasha from your navel, Swrga from your head, Dasa Dishaas or Ten Directions from your ears, Prithvi from your charanaas, and thus the entire 'Charaachara Jagat' from your own Being. Just as a tiny seed is the origin for Maha Vrikshas, the Unique Samsara is created and at the Time of Pralaya gets absorbed back into the 'Beeja' taking shape again at the Time of Creation. You are the holding hingelike Hlaadini or the Source of Happiness and Sandhini or the Preserver. You are also the Samvita or Vidya Shakti, the Vishaya Janya or the Product of Samsara Gunas of Joys and Sorrows; although You are the Nirguna or Featureless but again the Fountain of Satvika- Raajasika-Tamo Gunas! From the 'Karya Drishtata' or the view point of Actions, You assume myriad forms but from 'Kaarana Drishtata' or the view-point of cause and effect; you are just the Single Form. From one's own 'Antahkarana' or Inner Consciousness, You are the Maha Tatwa, Pradhana, Purusha and of Virat-Swarat-Samrat Rupas! You are the Akshaya, Sarva Bhuta Guna Swarupa, Samasta Guna Dharaka, Sarvatma, Sarveswara, Sarva Bhuta Vyapta, My Tapasya has been fulfilled as you have given me the 'Saakshaakaara' or Your Glorious Darshana as I am ever beholden to you fulfilling my life-ambition.) In response to Dhruva's sincere commendation, Bhagavan blessed Dhruva and stated: *Trailokyaadadhikey Sthaaney Sarva Taaraagrahaashrayah, Bhavishyati na Sandeho Matprasaadaabhavaan Dhruva/ Suryaatsomaatathaa Bhowmaat Soma Putraad Brihaspateyh, Sitaarkatanayaadeenaam Sarvaksharnaam tathaa Dhruva/ Saprataashinaamaseshenaam ye cha aimanikaah Suraah, Sarveshaamupari sthaanam tava dattam mayaa Dhruva/ Kechichaturyugam Yaavatkechimanvantaram Suraah, Tishthanti Bhavato dattaa mayaavai Kalpasamsthitih/ Sunitirapitey Maataa twadaasannithi nirmalaa, Vimaaney Tarakaa Bhutwaa Taavatkalam nivasyati/ Ye chatwaam Manavaah Praatah Sayam cha Susumaahitaah, Keertishyanti*

teshaam cha Mahatpunyam Bhavishyati/(Dhruva ! I shall bestow to you a Dhruva Sthaan or a Constant Place on the Sky and that be above the Lokas of Surya, Chandra, Mangala, Budha, Brihaspati, Shukra, and Shani Grahaas, above all the Places of Nakshatras, Sapta Rishis, and far above the Residences of Devas. Devatas would have the longevity of only Four Yugas and a few last only one Manvantara, but I grant you life for a full Kalpa! Your mother (who was the first inspiration for you to search for me when you were insulted by your step mother) would also last as a Star near Dhruva Loka travelling comfortably in a Vimana. Whosoever pray in your favour about your unending devotion to me either early morning or in the night fall would indeed be eligible for Maha Punya.)

Narada the Adviser to Ravanaasura to fetch Atma Linga of Shiva to Lanka

‘Kalah Priya’(mischief maker) Narada vide the Eternal Epic Ramayana, was a noted Adviser to the ten headed King of Lanka Ravanaasura; in fact Ravana was the great grand son of Brahma Deva and taking full advantage of the relationship of Ravana, Narada visited Lanka while Ravana was immersed in performing Maha Shiva Lingarchana: the latter initiated Ganeshwara Puja, Panchakshara Mantras, Pancha Mukha Dhyana of Purva Mukha Tatpurusha- Dakshina Mukha Aghorebhya-Paschima Mukha Sadyojata-Uttara Mukha Vaama Deva- and Ishana Urthwa Mukha. Ravana then performed Atma Raksha, Shiva Sankalpa, Ashtanga Namaskaras and initiated Rudra snaana after Prana Pratishtha with Namaka- Chamaka Mantra and Maha Nyasa Mantras, followed by Dasha Shanti Mantras. Narada was indeed impressed. He advised Ravana to cut short the process by having to bathe in the Arabian Sea, travel to Kailasa and then initiate the Shiva Lingarchana. Instead, he might as well fetch the ‘Atma Linga’ of Shiva himself as the replica to be brought to Lanka, the capital of Lanka itself! This should facilitate Ravana to worship Maha Shiva on a one to one basis! Ravana was readily impressed with the grand advice. He reached Kailasa and performed most intense tapasya for days and nights but there was no response from Maha Deva. A totally frustrated Ravana sought to break up the mountain of Kailasa to forcibly reach Maha Deva but still there was no response! He had desperately pulled out his veins, muscles and arteries of his heart and used his chords as the strings of a RudraVeena and sang the Shiva Tandava Stotra as follows;

*Jataatavigalajjalpravaha paavita sthale, galevalambya lambitaam bhujanga thunga maalikaam,
damaddamadmadanninaadavaddamayarvayam chakaara chanda tandavam tanotu nasshivasshivam/*

*Jataakataah sambhramabhramannilipam nirajjhari, vilolaveechi vallari virajamaana murthani, dagad dhaga-
jjwalallalaata patta paavake, kishora chandra shekhare ratih pratishamam mama/*

*Dharaadharendra nandini vilaasa bandha bandhurah, sphuradruganta santatipramoda maana maanase,
Kripaakataakshadhoraniruddhadurdharaavatih, kwachitddhigambare mano vinoda metu vastuni/*

*Jataabhujanga pingalaspura phanaa mani prabhaah, kadamba kunkumadrava pralipta digvadhu mukheh,
madaandhasindhura sphuratyaguttareeyamedure,mano vinoda madbhutam bibhartu bhuta bhardhari/*

*Sahasra lochana prabhrutya shesha lekhashehkarah, prasuunadhuli dhorani vidhusaraanghri peethabhuh,
bhujanga raajamaalaya nibaddha jaatajuutakah, shriyai chiraaya jaayataam chakora bandhu shekharah/*

*Lalaatachatvarajjala dhananjaya sphulingabhaah,nipeetapancha saayakam namannilimpa naayakam,
Sudhaamayukha lekhyaya viraajamaana shekharam, Maha Kapaali sampade shiro jataala mastunah/*

*Karaala phaala pattikaa dagaaddhaga jwalah, Dhananjayaadharikruta prachanda pancha saayakeh,
Dharaadharendra nandini kuchaagra chitra patrasah, prakalpnaika shilpinik trilochane matir mama/*

*Naveena megha mandali niruddha dhurddharahsphurah, tkuhoo nishedhineetamah prabandhabandhu
kandharah, Kalaanidaana bandhurasshriyam jagaaddhrandhara, nilimpanirjjaristanotu krittisinduhrah/*

*Praphullaneelapankaja prapanchakaalima prabhaah, nilambakanthakandaliruchiprabaddha kandharah
smaracchidam puracchidam bhavacchidam makhacchidam, gajacchidaandhacchidam tamantacchidam
bhaje/*

*Akharvasarvamangalaakalaa kadambamanjari, rasapravaaha maadhuri vijrumbhanaamadhu vratam,
Smaraantakam puraantakam bhavaantakam makhaantakam, Gajaantakaandhakaantakam tamanta kaantakam
bhaje/*

*Jayatvadabhra vibhramad bhujanganishvisah dvinirgatrama sphurat karaala phaala havya vaat, dhimad dhimi
dhvanan mridanga tunga mangalah, dhvanikrama pravartita prachanda taandava sshivah/*

*Drishad vichitra talpayorbhujanga mouktika srajoh, Girishtha ratna loshtayossuhridvipakshayoh,
trinaaravincha chakshushoh Prajaamaheemahendrayoh, samam pravartayanmanahkadaa Sadaa Shivam bhaje/*

*Kadaa nilimpa nirjari nikunjakotare vasah, Nvivikta durmatissadaa shirasthahmanjalim vahah, nvimukta lola
lochano lalaata phalalagnakah, shiveti mantra muccharassadaa sukhee bhavaamyaham/*

*Imamhi nityameva yuktamuttamottamam stavam, pathan smaran bruvannaro vishuddhi meti santatam, Hare
Gurou subhaktimaashu yaati naanyadhaa gatim, vimohanam hi dehinaam sushankarasya chintanam/*

*Pujaanasaana samaye Dashavaktra geetam, yasshambhu pujanamidam pathati pradoshe, tasya sadaiva
sumukheem pradadaati Shambhuh!*

Maha Deva was indeed so pleased with Ravana's unique prayer by using his the heart chords as his Hridaya Veena with dripping blood from the arteries and as his body was almost about to fall on the ground, Maha Deva made his 'sakshatkaara' and even as Ravana's body pieces were stitched together blessed him and donated his Atma Linga. However Maha Deva cautioned that the Atma Linga should be placed on Earth only once for all and would get stuck once for all!

The elated Ravana had no bounds of his bliss as his life fulfillment was accomplished to perform daily worship to Parama Shiva's own Atma Linga, while Devi Parvati, Ganesha, Kumara, Nandi, indeed the Deva Devis and Rishi Ganas were shocked and wondered about the consequences. Narada who had originally instigated Ravana- partly for fun and mainly to teach a lesson to the Asura's ego was stunned and non plussed! He had to instantly launch an effective and unfailing master plan as surely indeed Ravana who was already invincible would now have no bars indeed with the support of the worship of Maha Deva literally on one-to-one basis. Even as it was, Devas had turned to be Ravan's slaves and now eventually, the context and purport of Dharma and Nyaaya or Virtue and Justice would be rapidly eroded in the whole Universe! Narada realised that the fun with which he instigated Ravana would now backlash with far reaching consequences. He prayed to Ganesha for instant help for Loka Kalyana. The smiling Ganeshwara instantly appeared as a rustic teen age boy and assured Narada to disguise and anticipate Ravana's problem of having to take bath in the Sea as a part of his routine prayers just for while; Ravana spotted a seemingly innocent and reliable passer by and having enquired

of the credentials of the boy to hold the Atma Linga and assured the boy with huge remuneration for rendering the service. Even as Ravana concluded his prayers, the boy shouted thrice, kept down the Atma Linga and disappeared. Ravana's desperate might of his twenty hands and ten heads were no match to pull the Atma Linga out of the Earth! Thus Ravana's grand plan of worshipping Lord Shiva exclusively got melted off and so did his ego while Narada had the last laugh!

Prahlada and Narada

Maha Bhagavata Purana gives a the background account of Prahlada: When the Boy Sages-Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana and Sanatkumara-desired to enter Lord Vishnu's Abode-Vaikuntha-the two Gate Keepers Jaya and Vijaya refused entry as the unclad boys looked undeserving of an entry to the hallowed Place, as the latter were governed by the 'Tamo-Guna'. The Boy-Sages cursed the Gate Keepers to become Demons for three consecutive births and what was worse to become the enemies of that very Lord Vishnu, whom they worshipped intensely; they felt that as the Gate-keepers of the Place they suffered from excessive 'Tamo Guna' and had thus be punished. Hence they were born as Demons in the three successive births as Hiranyakasipu and Hiranyaksha, Ravana and Kumbhakarna and Sisupala and Dandavakra. Maha Muni gave the illustration of King Parikshith's recent example of his Grand Uncle Dharmaraja performing 'Rajasuya Yagna'(Sacrifice of Horse) at the end of which Lord Krishna was named as the Chief Guest and Sisupala brothers vehemently protested the honour to be bestowed on Krishna. Sisupala called Lord Krishna a fake and a cheat, who killed Kings like Kamsa and so on and was a timid person to have disappeared some eighteen times when he was challenged to fight.(The fact was that Krishna gave a promise to Sisupala's mother that He would tolerate one hundred mistakes against Himself and there after would kill Sisupala brothers.) As the hundredth blunder was committed at the Rajasuya congregation, Sisupala brothers were destroyed by the Lord Krishna's 'Sudarsana Chakra'(Discus).They attained 'Sayuja Mukthi', as originally, the Evil Persons were 'Vishnu Bhaktas', but due to the temporary aberration and the play of Tamo-Guna, they were cursed and punished but finally reached their original position.

Continuing the story of the curse of Sage- Boys to the Gate Keepers of Vaikuntha, Suka Muni elaborated as to how Hiranyakasipu was enraged at the demise of his brother Hiranyaksha, when he sought to push the Planet of Earth into Patala loka and the Incarnation of Lord Vishnu as the Great Boar killed him. To avenge the death of his brother, Hiranyakasipu performed unprecedented austerities to please Lord Brahma. The relentlessness of the austerities was such that fire emerged from the Demon's ears and was spread over the entire Universe. The Five Elements were shaken up and Demi-Gods appealed to Lord Brahma to intervene. As Brahma finally appeared before the Demon, the latter solicited immortality as his desire. As that would not be possible since every being in Creation would have to perish, then the Demon asked for boons that he would be tantamount to immortality,ie he could be killed by no living entity, demi-Gods, any power in the Universe, and neither during day nor night. Thus having been empowered by the benedictions from Lord Brahma, Hiranyakasipu terrorised the entire Universe and insisted the he was God himself and as such be worshipped by one and all. While at the Tapasya of Hiranyakashipu, Indra the King of Devas took the form of the demon King and sought to abort the fetus. **Narada** chided Indra and kept a vigil to safeguard till Prahlada was born. Since he was born, Narada ensured that **Prahlada** was a staunch devotee of Lord Narayana even by birth and it became evident that the boy could not be stopped from worshipping the Lord. The Demon King engaged the sons of Guru Sukracharya, (the Head Priest of Demons), named Sanda and Amarka to use their entire patience and forbearance to convert Prahlada's psyche away from the devotion to Narayana but to no avail. Hiranyakasipu

tried the essence of the Four known means of ‘Sama’ (Intense counseling or brain washing), ‘Dana’ (Material benefits), ‘Bheda’ (creating aversion against Narayana and appealing for filial duties) and finally the use of ‘Danda’ (by creating scare of death or violence of extreme degrees).Prahlada became inflexible and took to extreme devotion of Narayana in the most desperate manner. As the demon father asked the child as to who taught such nonsense since the Guru swore that he did not, Prahlada replied that Bhagavan Vishnu right in my heart and who else needed to teach him! As Hiranyakashipu shouted as to who that Bhagavan was! You stupid! Then Prahlada replied: *Na shabda gocharam yasya yogidheyam paramam padam, Yato yasha swayam sa Vishnuh parameshwra/* (Vishnu is Parameshwara who is ever worthy of meditation; he is neither visible nor heard and certainly not assessed but could certainly be visualised, heard or even assessed through selfless devotion, meditation and extreme faith!) Since, the King could not contain this nonsense any further, he ordered that this odd creature called Prahlada be tortured, cut into pieces and destroyed finally; as the Daitya resolved on these lines, Bhagavan despatched his Sudarshana Chakra to save the boy from the various deeds of unending violences: he had Prahlada trampled by elephants, bitten by snakes, sliced into body parts, thrown from mountain tops, blown by fierce winds, burnt by Agni, but each act of cruelty that was executed to the child furthered his confidence and devotion. The Daitya King called his Ministers and the Chiefs of his Army and confessed: Lo, this hopeless son of mine was burnt by Fire, sliced by weapons, bitten by poisonous snakes, subdued by harsh winds, deceased by powerful poisons, destroyed by delusions, dead by throwing from mountain tops, and trampled by elephants; this monument of Evil has no use for me excepting hastening my restlessness and anxiety; hence, I want you to crush him between mountains and dip deep into fathomless Seas for thousand years and be perished into oblivion!)

As Prahlada heard the above instructions of his Army of several ‘Akshouhinis’, Bhakta Prahlada strengthened himself and prayed to Paramaatma thus:

Namaste Pundarikaaksha namaste Purushottama, Namaste sarva Lokaatmaa namaste tigmachakrine,

Namo Brahmanya devaaya go brahmana hitaayacha,Jagaddhitaaya Krishnaaya Govindaaya namonamah/

(Pundarikaksha, Purushottama, Sarva Lokaatman, Tikshana Chakradhaari, Go-Brahmana-Hitakaari Krishna, Vaasudeva, Jagaddita Govinda! My sincere prostrations you again and again. As Brahma Swarupa, you do the scripting of Srishti; as Vishnu administer and preserve it, and as Rudra you perform the samhara; thus you are the Trimurti-dhaari Parameswara! In reality you assume the myriad Swarupas of Devas, Yakshas, Asuras, Siddhaas, Nagas, Gandharvaas, Kinnaraas, Piscachaas, Rakshasaas, Manushyas, Pashus, Pakshis, Sthaavaraas, Pipeelikaas or ants, Sariswarupaas, Prithivi, Jala, Akasha, Vayu, Shabda, Sparsha, Rupa, Rasa, Gandha, Manas, Buddhi, Atma, Kaala, Guna, and all other forms and indeed you are not only present in them but in fact you are all these yourself! You are the Vidya and Avidya, Satya and Asatya, Visha and Amrita, Vedokta Pravritti and Nivritti Karmaas; You are the Bhokta and Bhojya, and again the Karmaphala of Plus and minus variations; you are spread over among me and all others, among Bhutas and Bhuvanas, Gunas and Traits, Suchanaas or indications; all the Yogiganaas meditate you only, Yagnika ganas perform Yagnas only in your name, you are the Pitruganas and Devaganas receiving and forwarding Kavyaas and Havyas! Ishwara! The totality of Brahmanda is your Gross Form, of which a minute part is in the Form of Bhumi, and in that Sukshma Form of Earth are a staggering sub-forms of Beings and the ‘Antaraatma’ is the Sub- Conciousness; indeed far beyond is the ‘Sukshmaatma Sukshma’ ‘Avishaya’ or nothingness to whom my salutations! You are the Saguna- Nirguna Parashakti and Nitya Swarupini Shakti and it is that Para-Paraa Shakti which is even far interior or far beyond that Shakti is Vaasudeva. That ‘Vastu’which is not material but is a huge question-mark that I pray with

humility and extreme dedication! While the whole Universe is visible yet indivisible, may that Supreme Power who makes, maintains and mars it-as the Adi Kaarana, Akshara, Adhara Bhuta, Avyaya, and Adi Shakti save me and let me live so as to serve you again and again and ultimately get absorbed unto You! the Brahma Sanjnak Parama Purusha!)

As Prahlada's Naga Paasha was released, there was a commotion of Seas, the Nava Grahas were tottering from their alignments, and a series of Earth quakes occurred while the mountains which sought to crush Prahlada collapsed in smithereens and the powerful force of the depths of Seas into which Prahlada was submerged threw him out in the Sea-bed.No sooner that this happened than Hiranyakashipu was overcome with suppressed emotion for his son realising that Prahlada was indeed invincible and not himself as the Super Lord of Trilokas; almost immediately there was the grand appearance of Lord Narasimha who was neither man nor a lion as per Brahma's boon to Hiranyakashipu and the time too was dusky and propitious as it was neither day nor night. Even as Prahlada greeted his father, mother and Guru with veneration, the Unique Narasimha the immortal incarnation of Vishnu placed the greatest menace to the Universe in the form of Hiranyakashipu, pulled and rolled over across his mighty thighs and pierced his nails deep into the Daityas body to death. Bhakta Prahlada was unable to overcome his emotions and broke out into memorable prayers to the Avatara of Nrisimha. Lord Brahma, Lord Siva, the entire congregation of Demi-Gods led by Indra and the Great Sages appeared to witness how 'Dharma' was revived as the destruction of the enormous Demon King was complete. It was possible for Prahlada alone to gradually bring down the huge fury of Lord Narasimha, Who was neither an animal nor a human being, nor any species of Brahma's creation and the time of destruction was neither day nor night but dusk time, as per the Demon's own charter of death wish! Hiranakasipu attained 'Sarupya Mukti' thereafter. Prahlada became a highly benevolent King subsequently. Thus Narada paved the way to one of the significant 'Avataras' manifested by Lord Vishnu thus ensuring the revival of Dharma or Virtue and Nyaya or Justice against destruction of the evil.

[Till date Ahobila is an extremely popular Nrisimha Kshetra in Kadapa District of Andhra Pradesh in the forest mountain surroundings even with the broken pillar on the mountain top! *Aho veeryam aho shouryam aho bahu parakramam, Narasimham para daivam aho bilam aho balam/* Ahobila Kshetra is a popular Vaishnava (Vadakala) Kshetra split at two levels called in the Telugu local language as 'Eguva' and 'Diguva' or Upper and Lower levels- in the 'nallamala' forests of Kurnool District of Andhra Pradesh at the distance of 40 km from Nandyala or 150 km from Hyderabad at the Nallamala forest range at an altitude of 1000 ft. plus. That is the fabled Abode of Lord Narasimha or Prahlada Varada, the fourth incarnation of Maha Vishnu to terminate Hiranya Kashipu the demon who rescued Prahlada the illustrious Vishnu Bhakta. Amrita Valli is the corresponding Devi Lakshmi of the Godeless. Ahobila Kshetra opposite the Akshaya Tirtha where devotees purify themselves with snanas, before entering the Sacred Place portrays nine forms of Narasimha spread among nine Temples viz. Bhargava Nrisimha bestowing Lakshmikara siddhi or excellent prosperity as incarnate at the lower level of Ahobila, Yogananda Nrisimha also at the lower level signifying the aspect of compassion and overcoming problems of one's life; Chatravata Narasimha representing Ketu Graha bestowing comforts of Life and expertise in Fine Arts; Ugra Nrisimha Temple at the upper level along with Chenchu Lakshmi or a Goddess as of a local Tribe Leader's daughter who sought to cool down the fierce form of the Lord and eventually married to her representing Dei Lakshmi herself and teaching devotees the qualities of courage and timidlessness yet of maturity; Varaha Narasimha Swami at the upper level again along with his consort of Lakshmi; Malova Vara Nrisimha along with Shri Lakshmi at Lakshmi Hill granting total fulfillment and auspiciousness to devotees; Jwala Nrisimha as had just annihilated Haranya kashipu since a pond of brick colour with which the Lord had just washed his hands with the blood of the demon called Rakta gunta Tirtham;

Paavana Nrisimha or Kshetra Ratna Nrisimha or Pamulati Nrisimha Swami who provides safety and succor to devotees and finally Karanja Nrisimha or He who represents Shadvidha or six types of austerities and purities viz. those of 'Kara- charana- vaak- kaaya-karma- shravana- nayana' or by hands, legs, tongue, mouth, body, actions and mid-borne nature! At the Ahobila Complex, the significant Festivities are Phalguna Month celebrations, Janma Nakshatra (Swati) Mahotsavas, Gramotsavas, Monthly Celebrations and Tirumanjana Sevas. *Simhachala Tirtha*: Some 16 km near Vishakapattanam in Andhra Pradesh is another significant Nrisimha Kshetra in Bharat is at Simhachala or the Lion Giri viz. Varaha Lakshmi Nrisimha of 15th century built by Gajapati Raja of Kalinga, the present part of Odisha State and King Krishnadeva Raya of Vijayanagara also attended the Opening Ceremony Brahmotsavas as given in available Inscriptions. The Legend about this incarnation of Nrisimha is due to the curse to the Gate keepers to Maha Vishnu's Vaikuntha by Brahma Manasa Putras viz. Sanaka Sanandana Sanatana Kumaras who were stopped entry; the respective Danavas were Harayaksha in Varaha; Ravana-sura and Kumbhakarna in Shri Rama Avatara, and Kamsa and Shishupalain Krishnavatara, besides Hiranya kashipu in Nrisimha Avatara. The Bhakta saved from Hiranya kashipu in the Nrisimha Avatara was Prahlada. Special Festivals at Simhachala are of Akshaya Tritieya with Chandana Lepana or Alankara with Gandha and during Vaishakha Month. The main attractions at the Temple are a fantastic Stone Ratha and a 16 pillored Mandapa depicting Dashawataras and many Nrisimha Swarupas.]

Narada's prophesy and Sati Savitri vs. Yamadharma Raja

In the days of yore, there was a King named Ashwapati of Shaakala Vamsa in Madra Desha (the present Sialkot Territory) who did not secure a son. Being highly devoted to Devi Savitri (Gayatri), he intensified his worship to her and performed a daily 'havan'/ oblation to Agni with white 'Tilas' (Sesame seeds) in the presence of thousand Brahmanas for ten months and finally Devi Savitri appeared to Ashwapati on a Chaturthi day and granted an illustrious daughter to him and queen Malati; the baby was named as Savitri since she was born by the grace of Devi Savitri. The daughter grew into a charming and highly virtuous girl; a chance visit of Brahma-rshi **Narada** to the King and the daughter indicated that her husband would die on a specified day after her wedding. They both indeed were terribly worried about Narada's prophesy but she was married in due course to the son of King Jhumnatsen called Satyavan who was a charismatic prince. But unfortunately the King lost his kingdom as also the eye sight of his and of the wife. Savitri emboldened herself and faced the situation with confidence and performed unreserved and steadfast service to the parents-in-law. At the sametime, she served her husband so much that Narada's prophesy was always ringing in her ears constantly and never allowed the husband even for a while. She also worshipped her Guru and followed each and every advice of his as a word of law. Thus she was worshipping her husband, her parents-in-law and her Guru as much as never in history had performed in the past. As the specific Chaturthi that Narada warned about her husband's death within a year, she took permission of her blind parents-in-law and her Guru and entered a jungle along with Satyavan and decided to keep her husband the happiest man and spent every moment with him by showing and sharing with him the most memorable beauties of Nature, the waterfalls, the cool waters, the fragrant and colourful flowers and so on. She described that couples of hares, crows, lions, monkeys, and deers were all in a state of maddening infatuation and such wonderful experiences tended to extend lives forever! Meanwhile, Satyavan felt like cutting wood from some dry trees but Savitri cautioned that he should not be away from her. In great fun, he said that he would never ever dare to be away from her. Suddenly, Satyavan felt excruciating pain in his head and fell flat. Even while realising as to what was happening, she sensed that some thumb-long figures tied to Satyavan's soul and were ready to draw it towards the Southern direction and visioned that Yama Dharma Raja himself was present there. She screamed with

astonishment and closely following Yamaraja sobbed away and said: Sacred Scriptures assured that sincere devotion to mother provided this loka, devotion to father would secure Swarga and devotion to Guru would fetch Brahma loka but of what avail was her sincerity if Scriptures made false promises? Dharma Raja replied: Do not interfere with my duty; indeed the Scriptures were right, the dead soul was a virtuous person and that she too was a real Pativrata, but there was a fixed procedure of terminating a human being as per one's life span which was pre-determined and judgment was given as per norms. Savitri counter argued that for a woman, husband was a Deity and the provider of safety; a father, brother or a son were no doubt the safeguarders but the husband was above all and if he were to be forcibly taken away then she had no other alternative but to immolate her life. Dharma Raja was indeed taken back at her firmness and smilingly said that such an incidence as this was rare and that he would be pleased to bestow *any boon* excepting her husband's life. As Savitri took up the opportunity, she requested him to restore the eyesight as also the Kingdom to her in-laws and Dharma Raja readily granted these boons and asked her to go back so that he could perform his duty. He also asked her not to follow further and tire out herself without any aim or useful purpose. Devi Savitri replied that she would never feel tired following great celebrities of the stature of Dharma Raja, even if they were annoyed because only such emblems of Dharma could sift persons of genuineness or other-wise; it was stated in the Scriptures that one should never be afraid of even Agni, poison, and snakes compared to evil persons where as 'Satpurusahas' had an inner conscience and even if they were apparently rude and hurtfully outspoken, their basic quality would be outstanding and subject to change of stance since such 'Mahatmas' test the authenticity of other persons being faced. Even normal and impartial Kings and Administrators would tend to examine the realities of those who make requests and a Deity par excellence like Dharma Raja would like to make sure whether her supplications were pure and straight from the heart or not. That was the reason why Savitri felt untired of following Dharma Raja! Apparently, Dharma Raja was pleased with the logic of Savitri and replied that without insisting on the life of Satyavaan, she might ask for another boon. She grabbed the opportunity and requested that her parents were not blessed with a son; despite performing countless Sacred deeds and their daily homas in favour of Gayatri / Savitri they succeeded on giving birth to a daughter but not a 'Vamsodhara'. Dharma Raja conceded the *second boon* too and firmly admonished Savitri to pester further but should return home at once to organise the obsequies of her departed husband. Having secured the second boon from Dharmaraja, Savitri still followed the former and stated that any human being would like to fulfil three essential steps of Dharma, Artha and Kama as the corner-stones of an ideal life. She affirmed: *Dharmarjanam tathaa kaaryam purushena vijaanataa, Tallaabham Sarva laabhebhya yadaa Daiva viseshatey/ Dharmaschaartha scha kaamascha trivargo janmanah phalam, Dharma heenasya kaamaarthey vandhyaa sutasamou Prabho/ Dharmadarthastathaa kaamo Dharmalokadwayam tathaa, Dharma ekonuyaatenam yatra kwachanagaaminam/ Shareerena samam naasham sarvamanya -ddhi gacchati, Ekohi jaayatey jantureka eva vipadyatey/* (Deva! Any Enlightened person seeks to earn Dharma since that secures the best of gains; the objective of life is to fulfil the means of Dharma viz. Artha and Kaama; conversely, wealth and fulfilment of desires alone without Dharma would be wasting one's life. Dharma would certainly fulfil the means to achieve it and could at the same time lead to Salvation too. In the final analysis, a dying person leaves every thing behind except Dharma and a person born does not bring any possessions nor takes anything at death). Dharma Raja was pleased with what Savitri said and asked her a *third boon* to that outstanding Pativrata who had been fighting for her husband's life. In turn, Savitri asked the boon: *Varayaami twayaa dattam putraanaam shatamourasam, Anapatyasya lokeshu gatih kila na vidyatey/* (Deva! I request you to give

me the boon of securing hundred sons of my own, since without obtaining sons, there would be no ‘Sadgati’ to her and husband as parents).

Yama Raja then granted this boon also and Savitri commended Dharma as follows: *Dharmaadharmavidhaanajna Sarva Dharma Pravartaka, Twameva Jagato naathaha Prajaa samyamaney Yamah/ Karmanaaman -rupena Yasmaad Yamayasey Prajaah, Tasmaad vai proachyasey Deva Yama ityeva naamatah/ Dharmaneymaah Prajaah Sarvaa yasmaad ranjayasey Prabho, Tasmaat tey Dharma raageti naama Sadbhirnigadyatey/ Sukrutam dushkrutam chobhey Purodhaaya yadaa janaah/ Tatsavakaasham mrutaa yaanti tasmaat twam Mrutyu ruchyatey/* (Dharamaadharmavidhaataa! You are the highest Administrator of Dharma; since you are the Chief Regulator of Dharma, you are called *Yama*. As you ensure that human beings do not indulge in Adharma and make them follow the Path of Truth, you are known as *Dharma Raja*. Since when human beings die, you confront them with a full account of their good and bad deeds, and hence you are known as *Mrityu*. As the dead persons are approached by you with the details of each action of theirs by each Kshana/ second, and measure of Kaala or Time, you are called as *Kaala*. Since you are the designated Authority to terminate the life of each and every ‘charaachara’ or mobile and immobile being, you are titled *Antak*. As you are the eldest son of Surya Deva who has the name of Viwasvaan, you carry the name of *Vaiwasvata*. As and when the life of any being is over, you catch him suddenly and that is why you have another name viz. *Sara praanahara*. Devesha! Thanks to you the Ruk-Yajur- Sama Vedas continue to popularise the Principles of Virtue and Justice eternally; you are the upkeeper of nobility and discipline the world over and I have come to the shield of safety from you; kindly give back my husband at once as my in-laws too are frantic now for his life. As Savitri concluded her desperate prayers, Dharma Raja asserted that he was giving away Satyavan’s life back, that he would secure her hundred sons who would all become famous Kings, that her parents too would be blessed with hundred sons of virtue and that her brother would be popular as Malava, the King of Malva.

Thus concludes the Sacred Legend of Maha Saadhvi Savitri: *Tasmaad Saadhwyaha Striyah Pujyaah Satatam, Taasaamtu vakyam bhavateeha midhya na jaatu lokeshu charachareshu/Tasmaat sadaa taah pari pujaneeyaah, Kaamaan Samagraanabhi kaamayaanaih/* (Hence women of High Virtue ought to be worshipped since the Three Lokas are preserved due to their grace. The voices of Pativratas should never be ignored as they are worthy of veneration and fulfill their desires). [Source: Matsya Purana]

Narada’s visit to Yama Loka to learn of the significance of Ekadasha Vrata

Maharshi Vasishtha underlined the special connotation of Ekadashi Vrata to King Mandhata of Ikshavaku Clan and the ancestor of Lord Shi Rama. As Ekadashi was stated to be the Special Day of Vishnu, observance of ‘Upavasa’, ‘Puja’ and ‘Vrata’ on this day ought to be a pre-requisite to qualify the abolition of all the sins of a devotee. In fact, the advantage of performing the Vrata in full faith and high dedication as prescribed would secure the fruits of executing several Ashwamedha and Rajasuya Yagas, besides avoiding Yama Darshana! It is neither the Sacred Ganga, Gaya, Kashi, Pushkar, Kurukshetra, Narmada, Devika, Yamuna and Chandrabhaga that are stated to be more momentous than the Vrata. To signify the import of the Vrata, the Story of *King Rukmangada* was mentioned; he was in the habit of publicising through announcements on elephant tops the fact that the specific day was that of Ekadashi Vrata and all the citizens must observe fast, Puja, and penances as prescribed. The announcement was to alert that all the citizens in the age groups between eight and eighty five years ought to observe the fast and puja on that day and whosoever ate food and did not worship Vishnu would be liable for heavy punishment. Thus since a law was enforced, most of the citizens made a bee-line to Vishnu-dham and Lord Yama Dharma Raja

became free and Chitrugupta was jobless, as the paths leading to Yamaloka which were otherwise over-crowded had very few sinners in thin streams. Maharshi Narada made a visit to Yama loka and enquired of Dharma Raja as to why the hells which were highly noisy and bristling with tremendous activity became suddenly quiet and motionless! Dharma Raja informed Narada that King Rukmangada enforced 'Upavas' and Puja on Ekadashi days extended to Dwadashis also. As prompted by Narada, Dharma Raja accompanied by Chitrugupta reached Lord Brahma and complained that King Rukmangada was creating obstacles in the discharge of their duties and as per the Book of Instructions in Naraka, those who did not discharge their responsibilities even receiving their remunerations and enjoying the benefits of their postings would become worms; those officials who were corrupt and negligent of duties would suffer in Narakas for hundred 'Kalpas' of time; those who perform a deed by cheating the Master would serve as mice in the house of the Master; and those officials who misuse the services of subordinates for their own personal benefit would become cats. In the background of the Rule Book, King Rukmangada was placing hardship in the discharge of the duties of the Officials; so complained Dharma Raja and Chitrugupta. Lord Brahma replied that after all even by saying one word of 'Hari' by the tip of a person's tongue, the Punya accrued would surpass that of Tirtha Yatras to Kurushetra and Kasi; if a person had done the Ekadasha Vrat then 'Yagna Phalas' would be surely accrued and as such the actions taken by King Rukmangada were worthy of emulation, but not of condemnation. Yama Raja too was basically agreeable, as Narayana Himself involved in this case. To overcome this peculiar situation of encouraging King Rukmangada's efforts to popularise the 'Ekadasha Vrata' and at the same time ensure that Dharma Raja's duties are not stalled, Brahma created a charming woman called 'Mohini' who enticed the King Rukmangada while seated near a famous Shiva Linga on top of Mandarachala in the Kingdom, singing a highly enchanting lyric. The King who excelled in Vishnu's worship and even succeeded that the out flow of his citizens to Vaikuntha far exceeded to that of Yamaloka asked his son Dharmanga to share the responsibilities of Kingship, but tutored him well in following the principles of Dharma, especially in performing the Ekadasha Vrata. He however conceded that there could be exceptions to observe the Vrata such as expectant mothers, Kumari Kanyas, persons suffering from diseases or with disturbed minds due to reasons beyond their control. Meanwhile, with the arrival of Mohini on the scene, King Rukmanga lost control of his senses and decided to marry her at any cost. She agreed but said that although she might not ask for anything including his entire Kingdom, the only condition however was that what ever she might ask for must be instantly agreed to by him. The King stated that he would never disagree to whatever she desired and as he belonged to the illustrious Ikshvaku Vamsa he would never lie in his life time. Mohini asserted that she was the daughter of Brahma and would not like to be wedded without 'Veda Sakshi'. On way to his Capital along with Mohini, a lizard came under the feet of the horse on which the King and Mohini were seated. The lizard was crushed and was about to die but talked in a female human voice and requested the King to bestow the 'Punya' that he earned from the Vijaya Dwadashi Vrata as earned by him recently so that she could attain Salvation; Mohini did not like the entire incident and asked the King to travel forthwith without wasting time; the merciful King ignored Mohini's wish and donated the Punya of the Dwadashi Vrata to the lizard; the latter narrated the account of her previous birth and used 'Vashikarana Mantra' so that her husband was under thumb always and hence her birth as a lizard yet with the memory of her previous life. On reaching his Palace, the son Dharmanga welcomed the new couple who were married, and openly conveyed his request to the father's earlier wives including his mother that whatever was instructed by Mohini should be considered as the King's personal instructions. But, there were quite a few personal insinuations that Mohini subjected to the King to show him down but he suffered. Both the Prince Dharmanga and his mother cooperated with Mohini whole-heartedly since they did not desire to hurt the King. But the blow came when Mohini insisted that the King should not fast on Ekadashi days! The King begged Mohini not to insist to do so since he observed the Vrata all through his life and in fact enforced a law among his subjects who adopted the habit through the entire Kingdom. There are so many sins like 'sambhog' on Amavasya, hair-cut on Chaturdashi and

use of oil on Shashthi which are balanced by fasting on Ekadashi; giving wrong evidences, cheating the management of Establishments being served, obstructing wedding proposals of unmarried Kanyas, ingratitude, breaking promises of charity to Brahmanas, ‘Manikut’ or selling fake jewellery against market prices, ‘Tulakut’ or incorrect use of ‘Sensitive Balances’ while selling material, ‘Kanyakut’ or arranging a blemished girl, etc. are too excused by Ekadashi fasting. But Mohini was unconvinced and insisted against Ekadashi Vrata and blamed the King to break the promises to her at their wedding time. She even argued with several Brahmanas and Rishis like Gautam that only Sanyasis or widows are justified to undertake fastings on Ekadashi. King Rukmangada’s senior wife Sandhyavali too tried to convince Mohini not to insist on husband’s observing Eakadashi Vrata / taking food against his wishes and cited the examples of ‘Pativratas’. In turn, Mohini asked Sandhyavali that in case the King did not agree to observe the Ekadashi Upavas, then she (Sandhyavali) might as well ask the King to lift his sword to cut the Prince Dharmangada’s head and throw into her (Mohini’s) lap! The son Dharmangada happily agreed to the proposal of getting killed rather than letting his father down and forcing him to break the Ekadashi Vrata. As the King was rather prepared to cut his own son’s head, Mohini became unconscious. Just at that time, Bhagavan Vishnu appeared and bestowed Vaikuntha not only to the King, but to the Prince and the Queen Sandhyavali for their firm convictions and steadfastness to cling to Virtues as great and memorable examples to the world thus vindicating the magnitude and high value of the Ekadashi Vrata to the posterity. The hapless woman Mohini when regained consciousness found the dead bodies of the King, Sandhyavali and Dharmangada and was totally shocked and almost deranged, even as the Purohit of Rukmangada sprinkled water from his vessel and cursed her that she would be burnt into ashes. Vayu Deva refused to take away her soul which when reached on the path of heavens and even hells, her entry was denied. Her tormented soul was refused entry into the Patala and other lower lokas too. Finally, the Raja Purohit of Lord Brahma, called Vasudeva, took pity on the devastated, shamefully shaken and highly repentant soul of Mohini, revived her human form and sought to provide a fresh lease of life as a part of reformation process by describing the ‘Mahimas’ of the soul purifying Ganga ‘Snaan’ and observance of ‘Nakta Vratas’, Shiva Pujas, Shivaradhana on successive Purnima and Amavasya fastings, and Tirtha Yatras to Gaya for Pindadaanas for five days, Avamukti Kshetra, Purushottama Kshetra in Utkala Desha for darshan of Bhagavan Krishna, Balarama and Subhadra, darshanas of Bhagavan Nrisimha, Sweta Madhava, Matsya Madhava, Kalpa Vriksha, Prayaga Kshetra, Kuru Kshetra, Ganga Dwara (Hari Dwara), Badarikashrama, Siddhanatha Kamakshi, Prabhasa Kshetra, Pushkara, Panchavati, Pubdaripura, Gokarna, Lakshmanachala, Setu Kshetra, Narmada, Avanti, Mathura and Brindavana; ultimately Mohini having performed different kinds of ‘Prayaschittas’(atonements), performed ‘Mantra Yukta Yamuna Pravesha’ or dissolution into the Holy River of Yamuna along with appropriate recitation of Mantras. Such was the story of the significance of Ekadashi Vrata! (Narada Purana)

Narada’s futuristic vision

Approaching Krishna the Supreme Form of Lord Narayana Himself to worship Him in solitude, Devarshi Narada described the unbelievable miracles of Krishna from his futuristic vision: Being the Supreme Energy of the Universe, which is His own volition to create and play with, Krishna is the Super Controller of Time-the Past, Present and Future. He descends on Earth to protect the virtuous and destroy the Evil; the destruction of Arishta and Kesi are tiny instances of His omni-potency. Thus Narada disclosed the future Events, as follows: ‘Within two days now, Lord Krishna would witness the death of Chanura and Mustika, the man-mountain wrestlers and the massive elephant Kuvalayapida. The cruel King Kamsa would be the next target. The annihilations of Demons Kalayavana, Mura, Sankha and Naraka would follow. Krishna would defeat Indra and present ‘Parijata’- the Heavenly Tree to Queen

Rukmini; marry many daughters of Kings after defeating them out of valour; deliver King Nriga from his curse; capture the jewel 'Samanthaka' from Jambavantha the Great Bear and marry Jambavati; revive and bring back the dead son of Sandipani Muni from the abode of Yama, the King of death; kill Poundraka, burn the City of Kasi; annihilate Dantavakra and the King of Chedi at Rajasurya Sacrifice; perform several other pastimes at 'Dwaraka' and emerge as the Charioteer of Arjuna at the Epic Battle of Mahabharata and after destroying many other Evil Forces lighten the burden of Earth!' Thus Narada provided to the posterity a sweep of events to happen in future as per his mystic powers.

Narada's alert to Kamsa about his demolition and of his associates

Narada disclosed to Kamsa that the killers of Arishta, Kesi and other emissaries sent by the latter to kill Krishna and Balarama were actually the sons of Vasudeva and Devaki but not of Nanda and Yashoda. Kamsa wished to kill his sister and Vasudeva in prison at once but was restrained by Narada. Kamsa called Chanura and Mushtika -the monster-like wrestlers, to get ready for a duel with the boys to be invited for a Bow-Sacrifice in honour of Yadus and asked Akrura of Yadu Vamsa to personally invite and accompany the boys of Nanda to celebrate the Function. There was alround excitement in Mathura as the the illustrious brothers visited the City in person! Several persons gathered to see Krishna and Balarama, the mystifying figures from Brindavan even as large collections of ladies joined the processions as they were mesmerised. On way, the brothers met a washerman and asked for suitable dresses for them, but he was headstrong and talked foul and told them that they were beggars; Krishna nipped his head with his little finger; the miscreants were Kamsa's followers and the notice was sent to the King squarely and he had no sleep in the previous night. They met a weaver and asked for clothes which were presented to them instantly as he recognised Almighty in them and similarly a flower vendor accosted them with humility and garlanded the boys; the brothers blessed them with prosperity and family welfare. While crossing a high road, they witnessed a hunch back Girl named Trivakra, carrying a tray of perfumes to the King's Court and while conversing with her, Krishna pulled her up and straightened her body to convert her as a normal person; the feat was witnessed by many onlookers as a sample miracle. They visited the Bow Arena where the Sacrifice was to be done the day next and broke the 'Indra Dhanush' with ease even as a contingent of soldiers protested and fought. On the day next, the Arena of Wrestling was agog with exhilaration, when Krishna and Balaram entered the place, the mighty elephant Kuvalayapida was shattered in a jiffy. Later they participated in the Wrestling Tournament where Charura, Mustika, Kutha, Sala and Tosala were smashed. There were cheers alround but seeing the other wreslers running away, Kamsa was outraged and sougt to kill the boys himself with his sword. The mystery Boys flew across to the Stage and devastated Kamsa like two ferocious lions tearing a lamb. There was a furore in the assembly and Kamsa's eight brothers headed by Kanka and Nyagrodhaka were crushed too. The Invincible Lords Krishna and Balarama opened the prison gates of their parents and touched their feet, as they were stunned and went into a trance. The Boys paid their obeisances profusely and told them: '*Yas taylor atmajah Kalpa-atmanacha dhanenucha-vrittim na dadyat tam pretha-Sva mamsam khadyanti hi*' (A son, though able to do so, fails to provide for his parents with his physical resources and wealth is forced after his death to eat his own flesh). They further said: '*Sarvartha sambhava deho-janitho poshito Yatah- na taylor yati nirvesam-pitror martyah satayushya*' (As one's body is acquired by parents, the goals of life are fulfilled since their parents gave birth and sustenance; therefore no mortal man can repay his debts enen if he lives for hundred lives). Vasudeva's son Ugrasena was coronated as the King of Mathura and the Second Birth Celebrations of the Boys was performed 'Thread Ceremony or Yagnopavitha and

Gayatri) and relatives and relations were invited. Indeed they missed the presence of their foster parents Nanda and Yashoda as also the inhabitants of Gokul and Brindavan, especially the sprightly Gopikas.

Krishna and Balarama visited their Spiritual Teacher Sandipa Muni who resided at Avanti (Ujjain) was visited bringing immense joy to the Muni. They offered give 'Guru Dakshina' for the Studies of Dhanur Veda, Martial Arts and War Tactics. The Muni asked for their son dead in the Ocean at Prabhasa as he was devoured by a Demon Panchajanya (who had the shape of a conch shell). As the son of the Guru was not in the Demon's stomach, they reached 'Samyamani' the Abode of Yamadhararaja and brought the dead boy alive. Thus Krishna and Balarama gave Guru Dakshina to Sandipa Muni. There after they visited Uddhava, their childhood friend and nephew, requested him to visit the Vraja places and meet their parents and well wishers as also the Gopikas and narrate to them an account of their activities at Mathura. Uddhava on reaching the Places met them all, and narrated the happenings. He returned back, after an emotional and tearful send-off with return messages from all of them, especially Gopikas.

The two Queens of the deceased Kamsa, Asti and Prapthi, approached their father Jarasandha, the highly powerful Monarch of Magadha and asked for retribution for the 'misdeeds' of Balarama and Krishna. With a huge army under him, Jarasandha attacked Mathura with some twenty three Akshouhinis of infantry, cavalry and elephantry and challenged Krishna and Balarama. The Lords shattered the massive opponents even as they had a minor number; and made sure that only Jarasandha be spared so that he would return back to regroup his men and material. Indeed he returned back again and again, getting routed for seventeen times. When Jarasandha was expected to attack for the eighteenth time, -Yavanas, the Mleccha foreign forces- headed by Kalayavana attacked Mathura with thirty million barbarian soldiers of desperation and cruelty. Krishna and Balarama felt that while they would fight with Yavanas, Jarasandha's army might simultaneously harm Yadus. Thus they planned to build a new place, named Dwaraka (with twelve Gates) and asked Visvakarma, the Architect of Devas who created a beautiful and well structured fortress City touching the Sea. By means of His mystic Yoga Maya (Power of Illusion), the Citizens of Mathura got transferred, lock-stock and barrel-overnight to Dvaraka and found themselves in luxurious palaces. Even as Balarama was defending Mathura, Krishna attracted the attention of Kalayavana, passing singly by foot, by the Main Gate of Mathura. Kalayavana followed Krishna closely but always unreachable with some distance apart and led the Mlechha into a mountain cave. Thinking that Krishna Himself assumed a new 'Rupa' (Body) as an old and haggardly person in the cave as Krishna was known for such powers, Kalayavana kicked the old man fast asleep. Indeed He was not Krishna but Muchukunda, the son of Mandhata of Ikshvaku dynasty. He was the defender of Demi-Gods from Daityas for long but since Lord Kartikeya became the Commander of Demi- Gods, the latter relieved Muchukunda of his duties and Kartikeya advised him of retirement and since then he was sleeping in the cave, unaware of hundreds of years passed by! By his very looks of fire, Muchukunda converted Kalayavana into ashes as per Indra's benediction that if anybody disturbed his slumber would be burnt to ashes! Subsequently Krishna granted a wish to Muchukunda to be reborn as a Sage from his Kshatriya's current birth. Muchukunda exited from the cave into a World new from what he knew and realised that Kali Yuga was on the anvil, as the size of humans, animals, birds and trees was reduced considerably. He proceeded to Gandhamadana mountain and reached Nara-Narayana Ashram and meditated for the rest his life. Meanwhile, Krishna and Balarama found Mathura under the seige of Yavanas and with their Chief Kalayavana was missing found themselves shattered by a handful of Yadava soldiers and of course by Krishna and Balarama. The jewellery and wealth plundered by the dead Yavanas, being carried to Dvaraka by the Yadavas was intercepted by Jarasandha. Krishna and Balaram

took to their heels (as Jarasandha was not destined to die in their hands). When chased to a mountain named Pravarshana , Jarasandha put the mountain top afire by his soldiers and felt that the two might have been burnt. [Jarasandha took to prison a number of Kings at Yudhishtar’s Rajasuya Yaga since they agreed to Krishna becoming the Chief Guest; subsequently when Krishna, Bhima and Arjun visited Jarasandha’s Palace in disguise as Bramanas to free the Kings, the three of them challenged him for a duel with any one of them and Bhima was chosen.. Jarasandha was not getting killed for many days and Krishna hinted to tear Jarasandha’s body by cutting branch of a tree and throwing up the pieces upside down in opposite directions. This was because a Rishi blessed King Brihadhratha (father of Jarasandha) for a child with a fruit which was cut into two half pieces and distributed to two of his wives, but they delivered a child in two pieces; the child was united by putting the two pieces of their body upside down by a Demoness named Jara and hence the name was Jara-sandha. After Bhima killed Jarasandha, some 21,000 Kings, defeated in wars and imprisoned, were liberated.]

Narada’s questionnaire about Brahma’s charity of Kalaap village

Sage Narada told Arjun that in the context of ‘Daan Pradaan’ or bestowing charity of a large piece of land to a well deserved Brahmana Community; he travelled the World over to identify a Place where satisfactory replies are received to a Questionnaire of Twelve Queries framed by him. The questions were: 1) who knows ‘Matrikas’ well; how many ‘Matrikas’ are there and how many ‘Aksharas’ or Letters? 2) What are the Twentyfive Materials in the domestic or personal context? 3) Who knows the art of converting several women into one? 4) Who is the unique person that knows the ‘Vaakya Rachana’ or the Writer of Sentences connected with Strange Fiction? 5) Who is the learned Brahmana living in an Ocean with full awareness that a ferocious crocodile is always around? 6) Who is the best Brahmana possessing the knowledge of eight-fold Braahmanatva? 7) Which are the foremost days falling at the beginning of each Yuga? 8) Which are the first days of each ‘Manvantara’? 9) Which was the first day that Surya Deva rode in his chariot? 10) Who could explain that human beings are put to tremendous anxiety like a black serpent has? 11) Who is the most intelligent and practical human being in the whole world and why? 12) Who is aware of the two distinct routes available to human beings? Sage Narada could not get convincing replies to the above questionnaire among the several places visited and Expets interviewed as the questions were supposed to be tough! Then suddenly it occurred to the Sage that he could perhaps try out the Kalap Village that boasted of exceptionally renowned Veda Pundits. On reaching there and having posed the questions, the Elders of the Village commented that the questions were indeed very elementary and could as well be replied by one of an unintelligent and dull boys of the village! He asked a boy said to be of an inferior intelligence named Suthanu who gave the replies as follows:

In his preface before answering the questions, Suthanu said that various Gurus normally tended to teach the Scriptures and Mantras, generations after generations, only by memorizing but without necessarily providing the meaning, let alone the implications and intricacies of the stanzas. Indeed a Brahmana who merely memorized the Mantras without realizing the meaning was a mere two legged animal! For example, ‘Aakar’ is known as Brahma, ‘Ukar’ is Vishnu and ‘Makar’ is Siva; the Triguna form of AUM with ‘Anuswarup Artha Matra’ on top of AUM (in Sanskrit) is Maheswara Himself! How many are aware of the significance of Omkara Mantra? Coming back to the *first question* as to how many types of ‘Matrikas’ are there and of how many ‘Ahshas’ or Letters are in the Matrikas, the reply is that there are twenty letters in a Matrika. Besides there are fourteen ‘Swaras’, thirty three ‘Vyanjanas’, ‘Anuswaras’,

‘Visarga’, ‘Jihva muleeya’ or tongue-ended voice and ‘Upadhaneeyas’. Matrikas are called the essence of Language. The fourteen ‘Swaras’ from ‘A Kar’ to ‘Auom kar’ represent ‘Manu Swarupas’ viz. Swayambhu, Swarochish, Auttam, Raivat, Tamas, Chakshu, Vaivasvath (the Present Manu), Savarni, Brahma Savarni, Rudra Savarni, Daksha Savarni, Dharma Savarni, Roucha and Bhautya. The current Manu Vaivasvat is Rukara Swarup and his colour is Black. From letters ‘Bha’ to ‘Sha’ are eight ‘Vasus’ viz. Dhruva, Ghora, Sowmya, Apah, Nala, Nila, Pratyasha and Prabhasa. The Letters from ‘Ka’ to ‘Ha’ represent thirty three Devatas. Actually letters from ‘Ka’ to ‘Tha’ represent Twelve Adityas viz. Dhata, Mitra, Aryama, Shakra, Varuna, Amshu, Bhaga, Vivisvan, Pusha, Savita, Tvashta and Vishnu. From ‘Da’ to ‘Ba’ are Eleven Rudras viz. Kapali, Pingala, Bhima, Virupaksha, Vilohita, Ajaka, Shasana, Shasta, Shambhu, Chanda and Bhava. Letters ‘Sa’ and ‘Ha’ are represented by the two Ashvini Kumars, thus accounting for all the thirty three Devatas. The Letters ‘Anuswar’, ‘Visarg’, ‘Jihva Muleeya’ and ‘Upadhaneeyas’ stand for ‘Jarayuja’, ‘Andaja’, ‘Swedaja’ and ‘Udbhija’.

About the *Second question* regarding twenty five ‘Vastus’ or materials for domestic/personal utility, the reply is: These are ‘Pancha Bhutas’ viz. Prithivi (Earth), Apas (Water), Tejas (Radiance), Vayu (Wind) and Akash (Sky); Five ‘Karmendriyas’ (Mouth, hands, feet, anus and genital); Five Jnanendriyas (Ears, Eyes, Tongue, Nose and Skin) and the corresponding reactions viz. Shabda (Sound), Rupa (Vision), Rasa (Taste), Ghrana (Smell) and Sparsha (Feeling) and ‘Pancha Vishayas’ viz. Man (Mind), Buddhi (Thinking), Antaratma (Conscience), Ahankar (Ego), Prakriti (Nature / Maya) and Purusha (Almighty). In other words, the Twenty Five Tatvas of Domestic / Physical nature as above are blessed by Almighty to realize the Self as reflected from Paramatma.

The *Third question* concerns about the various forms of a woman who is essentially a single entity. The reply is about a person’s ‘Buddhi’ or mental condition which is comparable to that of a woman whose forms and moods are several (Frailty thy name is a woman!). It is the single Buddhi which takes myriad kinds of feelings, reactions and impulses.

The *Fourth question* relates to a person who exists in a ‘Sansar’ (World) and describes it as an attraction like the beautiful phrasing of an Essay, not realizing that the charm of the write-up is a trap or the ‘Sansar Bandhan’; hence the lure of life is but a powerful bondage!

The *Fifth query* is about the joy of living in an ocean, being fully aware of the dangerous crocodile nearby. Human beings get enticed to swim in an ocean, despite the risk of life and it is that ‘Lobha’ or attraction which generates ‘Moha’ (obsession) or ‘Maya’, ‘Abhiman’ or deep sense of Belonging, insensitivity to the risk involved, avarice to possess more and more, ignorance and sheer stupidity. All these are ramifications of ‘Vyamoha’ (possessive nature) like desire to secure other’s wealth, woman, and comfort, all at once being dishonest, undeserved and corrupt. The sense of Lobha leads to ego, deceit, anger and jealousy. The lurking crocodile is surely attractive but hazardous.

The *Sixth inquiry concerns* the Eight-fold ‘Brahmanatva’ classified as Matra, Brahmana, Srotriya, Anuchan, Bhruva, Rishi Kalpa, Rishi and Muni. A normal Brahmana by birth and caste is invariably the one who nodoubt has the advantage of ‘Upanayana’ Samskara and Gayatri ‘Upasesha’ called Sacred Thread Ceremony but with or without performing Vedic Karmas or duties; this kind of an ordinary Brahmana is name sake only. He who follows ‘Vedic Achara’ or performs Veda Practices being soft natured, fond of loneliness, truthful and pious is a Brahmana in a better sense than a ‘Matra’ type. The better category of Brahmanas are ‘Srotriyas’ who are Ritual, Virtuous, proficient of atleast one Veda sakha (Branch) along with six vedangas, pure hearted and Dharmajnanas. The higher class of Brahmanas called ‘Anuchans’ are well read, Guru Type of senior Vidwans who preach and teach and practise ideal ‘Brahmanatva’. The further higher category is called Brahmanas with worldly wisdom to be able to interpret Principles to practical situations, authorities on Vedas, ‘Samyamis’ who have restraint and poise,

Tatva Gyan and Senior Guides on Rituals etc. ‘Rishi Kalpas’ are Ashrama Dwellers, Naishthies, and limited Eaters. The Rishis are Dhyana Nishtha Parayanas (Meditation-Centric) and Jitendriyas or victorious of various worldly temptations. Munis are beyond the barriers of Brahmanas and the known norms and controls applicable to them, since they belong to Super Human Beings worthy of worship and possess yogic powers and Siddhis.

The *Seventh query* was about the first days of each Yuga. Kartika Sukla Navami was the first day of Satya Yuga, Visakha Sukla Tritiya was of Tretha Yuga, Marga Krishna Amavasya was of Dwapara Yuga and Bhadra Krishna Trayodasi was the opening day of Kali Yuga. Charities and ‘homams’ performed on the Yugadi Days are stated to be hundred days superior compared to normal days.

The *Eighth question* was about the opening days of each of the Fourteen Manvantaras. These are Asvayuja Sukla Navami, Kartika Dwadasi, Chaitra and Bhadra Tritiya, Phalguna Amavasya, Paushya Ekadasi, Ashadha Dasami, Magha Saptami, Shravana Krishna Ashtami, Ashadha Pournami, Kartika Pournami, Phalguna/Chaitra/Jeyshtha Pournamis are all worthy of charities and homams.

That Lord Surya mounted his chariot for the first time was on Magha Sukla Panchami, known as the ‘Ratha Saptami’ was the reply to the *Ninth question* and austerities and charities are stated to be highly fruitful bestowing Lord Surya’s blessings to destroy poverty and improve happiness of the devotees.

The *Tenth question* was about the anxiety of life of any human being; the reply was that who ever has to beg for food each and every day was indeed the most unfortunate one in the world; such a person not only had constant worry through out his/her life but is destined to go to hell after death too.

The *Eleventh query* was about the Super expert in this frightful world. The reply given by Suthanu stated that the best Daksha of Dakshas was he who realized as to what would happen after death and tried to equip him to perform pious acts so as to minimize the impact of current life and possibly of the previous lives. If a person devotes at least eight months and one day before death or in other words of the last leg of life and possibly as many days of life as possible, would be considered as an Expert.

Finally, the *Twelfth question* seeks reply about the two alternative routes of attaining Salvation viz. the normal ‘Karma Marg’/ the Dharmic route of enjoying life as also of attaining the high bliss of Moksha after death and alternatively adopting the ‘Vihanga Marg’ (The Sky route) or straight-away adopt the ‘Naishkarma’ Marg or the ‘Jnaana Marg. If one were not to opt for either route, the concerned human being is as good as a ‘Pakhandi’ or ignorant fool!

Having received the replies to all the Twelve Questions, Sage Narada was thrilled that Lord Brahma (his father) ought to be complemented as the latter’s ‘Srishti’ (Creation) was indeed amazing, since a boy was able to reply the queries. Pursuant to Brahma’s behest, the process of selection was completed and a substantial charity was declared as a Gift to the ‘Kalaap Gramvaasis’ or the Villagers of Kalaap a Huge Area viz. Mahi Sagara Sangama Maha Tirtha. This Tirtha was situated from Kalap Gram by about hundred yojanas by Akash Marg (The Sky Route) and by the Grace of Kartikeya all the residents of Kalaap Gram could be shifted by a long jump. This most Sacred Tirtha was such that there were no proverbial thieves viz. Kama (desire), Krodha (anger), Lobha (avarice) etc. who could rob the immense wealth of Gyan in the Holy Region. Kalaap Gram itself was some hundred yojanas on the mountains of Kedarnath Tirtha. As a result of the Great Charity of Lord Brahma by Sage Narada, some Thirty Thousand Brahmanas of immense quality who were versatile in ‘Adhyayan’ of Vedas and Scriptures and ‘Anushtaan’ (Ritualistic Meditation) got transferred to Mahi Sagara. (Skanda Purana)

Narada’s knowledge is *par excellence!*

Vedas are known as the oldest Scriptures that emerged from the mouth of Lord Brahma, Puranas are stated to be great significance for the following generations. Brahmarshi Narada who excelled in Veda Vedangas narrated Narada Purana which has had carved a niche as of being one of the Eighteen Major

Puranas to Maharshi Sanaka of the four Illustrious Manasika Putras (Mind- born Sons) of Brahma viz. Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanaatana and Sanat Kumaras. This was retold by Maha Muni Suta at a huge congregation of twenty six thousand Munis headed by Saunaka at 'Naimisharanya'. Narada Purana has two Parts-the 'Purva' and 'Uttara- the first Part with Four Chapters describing the Origin of the Universe, Application of Mantras, Worship through Rituals and Vratas while the latter Part dealing with Incarnations and significance of Pigrimages and Daanas (Offerings).The Sages prefaced their query as to how the normal aspirations of human beings viz. 'Dharma'(Virtue), 'Artha' (Prosperity), Kama (Fulfillment), 'Moksha' (Salvation) could be realized and how Narada Purana approached this objective. As the Kumara brothers were on way to Brahma, Sanaka and Narada met at the top of Meru Mountain and had a dip in Ganges that emerged from the Sacred Feet of Vishnu. Extolling the magnitude and enormity of Lord Vishnu, Narada asked Sanaka as to how could one realize Lord Vishnu, what was the cause of Creation, what were the features of devotion, knowledge and penance and how did Bhagavan create Brahma and other manifestations! Sanaka explained that Vishnu materialized from the right part of his body the Lord Brahma (sprouted by the stem of Lotus from Bhagavan's navel), Rudra from his middle part and created Vishnu, a replica of his own from the left side. He also created images/ illusions of Lakshmi, Uma, Chandika and Sarasvati which were his Shaktis (Powers). He is of 'Vyakta' (Visionable) and 'Avyakta' (Invisible) nature but is all-pervasive and has Sat-Chit-Ananda as his basic features; he is Prakriti, Purusha and Kaala; he is Paramatma creating Five Karmendriyas (Sight, Sound, Scent, Touch and Taste), the corresponding Gyanendriyas (Eyes, Ears, Nose, Skin and Tongue), Three 'Gunas' or Characteristics) of Satvika-Rajas-Tamasika form; Maha Tatwa leading to the 'Ahamkaras'(Natural dispositions) creating 'Tanmatras'; and Pancha Bhutas (Earth, Water, Light, Air and Sky). Then Brahma commenced Srishti (Creation) of Tamasika nature to start with of Pasu-Pakshi and Mriga (Cattle, Birds and Animals) and Rakshasas but quickly took up the Creation of Satvika Sarga of Devas, of human beings by Rajasika Sarga, followed by Daksha and progeny and thus the World got full by now. Then came into existence of the Seven Lokas viz. Bhurloka, Bhuvarloka, Swarlooka, Maharloka, Janaloka, Tapaloka and Satyaloka, besides the Under-Sea Lokas viz. Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talatala, Mahatala, Rasatala and Patala. Brahma created Loka Palakas (Administrators) of each of the Lokas as also the Mountains, Rivers, and all the essential provisions to enable life. At the Center of Earth, Brahma created Meru Mountain as also the peripheral areas beyond which were materialized the Seven Seas viz. Kshiroda, Ikshurasoda, Surada, Ghrita, Dadhi and Swadu; and Seven Dwipas (Islands), viz. Jambu, Plaksha, Shalmali, Kusha, Krouncha, Shaakha and Pushkara . It is at the north of Kshira Sagara and south of Himalayas that Bharata Varsha is situated, known as the 'Karma Bhumi' where by and large the population worship Narayana, Krishna and Vasudeva or Shiva, Neelakantha and Shankara. Those who did not worship out of ignorance or arrogance would visit various hells since they hardly had the tendency to be virtuous, devoted and even-minded; yet Bhagavan who had been most impartial, extremely forgiving and always merciful, would await every small good turn of any human being or even a negligible Being in the 'Charaachara' (Moving or Immoveable) Srishti and bestow multiplying effects in providing boons. This was the reason why one should worship Vaasu Deva always: *Vaasu Deva paro Dharmo Vaasu Deva param Tapah, Vaasu Deva param Jnaanam Vaasu Deva paraa gatih/ Vaasu Devaatmikam sarva jagat sthaavarajangamam/ AaBrahmastambha paryantam tasmaadanyatra vidyatey/ Sa yeva Dhaataa Tripurantaakascha sa yeva Devaasura Yagna rupah, sa eva Brahmaandamidam tatonyatra kinchidastit Vyatirikta rupam, Yasyaatparam naparamasti kinchidysmadaneeyatra tatha Mahiyan, Vyaptam hi tenedaminda vichitram tam Deva Devam Pranametsameedyam* (It is Vaasudeva who is the final goal of all Dharmas; the end result of all Tapasyas; awareness of Vaasudeva Tatwa is the best Gyan and route to attain Vaasudeva ; from Brahma down to 'Krimikeetas'(insects and flies) is the manifestation of Vaasudeva without doubt; He is Brahma and Shiva; He is all Devas, Asuras, Yagna Rupa and Brahmaanda and none else; there is neither bigger nor smaller than him; Bhagavan Vishnu has pervaded this entire Universe; is there any other Super Force who is worthy of worship!)

Such was the solid foundation of the intense knowledge that Brahmarshi Narada acquired as partly reflected in the Narada Maha Purana. Besides digesting the substance of Chatur Vedas viz. Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Saama Veda and Atharva Veda, Narada explained in detail that in the process of 'Shiksha Nirupana' Six Vedangas constituted the 'Mukti Sadhana' or Accomplishment of Salvation, as he learnt from Sanandana Maharshi ; these are *Shiksha, Kalpa, Vyakarana, Nirukti, Chhandas and Jyotisha*. It was that magnificent fund of knowledge that Narada narrated in his Maha Purana. In relation to Shiksha, the highlight was on Sangeeta (Music and Dance) comprising Swara Shastra. In the Swara Shastra, the Swara of Archika is related to Rig Veda, 'Gaandhik' is to 'Gaadha' and 'Saamik' is to Sama Veda. A 'Swara' is according to 'Ruchas' (Hymns) and their variations, while in 'Gathas' or metered rhythmic verses Sama Veda has 'Vyavadhaanas' or pauses. The Yajna stotras, karanas and Mantras are required to be pronounced as per Swaras; otherwise they turn out to be 'Viruddha Swaras'. In the entire 'Vangmaya' Shastra (Vocabulary), pronunciation originates from 'Vakshasthala' (chest), 'Kantha' (throat) and 'Mastaka'(head); from the chest emerges the low level sounds normally resorted to morning singing, from the Kantha emerge the medium and very broad variety of sounds and from Mastaka are emanated high pitch sounds and their variations of volume. The *Sapta Swaras*-Sa, Ri, Ga, Ma, Pa, Da, and Ni-are 'Prathama' (Shadaja), 'Dwitiya' (Rishabha), 'Tritiya' (Gandhara), 'Chaturtha' (Madhyama), 'Mandra' (Panchama), 'Krushtha' (Dhaivata) and 'Atiswara' (Nishadha). Shadaja-Sa- stands for 'Sagar' (Sea) with peacock as the representative bird, 'Muladhara' (the base of the spine) as the Chakra (body part) and the ruling Deity as Ganapati. Rishabha Re-means bull representing the bird Skylark, 'Swadhishtana' or genital as the Chakra and the ruling Deity is Agni. Gandhara Swara 'Ga' means Gagan or Sky with goat as the representative animal, 'Manipura' (solar plexus/ naval) as the Chakra and Rudra is the concerned Deity. Madhyama-Ma-means the Middle, represented by the bird dove, Anahata (heart) being the relevant body part and Vishnu as the Ruler concerned. Panchama-Pa-means the fifth, represented by nightingale and 'Vishuddha' (throat) as the relevant body part and the Ruling Deity is Sage Narada. The Swara titled Dhaivata-Dha- means Dharti or Earth, the representative animal being horse, the relevant Chakra being 'Aajna' or the third eye and the Ruler being Sada Shiva. The Seventh Swara viz. Nishada-Ni- meaning Hunter and standing for the animal Elephant, has 'Sahasrara' (the crown of the head) as the body part, the Ruler being Surya as the Deity. Besides the Swaras, Shadaja, Madhyama and Gandhara are known as three '*Graamaas*' (gamut or scale in music). Those who render 'Saama Gana' approve twenty graamas in Madhyama Swara, fourteen in Shadaja and fifteen in Gandhara. Also there are seven *Murchanas* (Intonations / Modulations) meant for Devatas viz. Nandi, Vishaala, Sumukhi, Chitra, Chitravati, Sukha and Bala; and seven for Pitaras viz. Aapyaayani, Vishwabhruta, Chandra, Hema, Kapardini, Maitri and Baarhati. For Rishis too there are seven Murchanas viz. Uttara Mandra in Shadaja Swara, Abhi Rudrata in Rishabha, and Ashvakranta in Gandhara. Besides, there are other Murchanas like Souvira in Madhyama Swara, Harshika in Panchama and Uttarayata in Dhaivata Swara. The seven Murchanas utilised by Rishis are also normally used by humans. Normally, there are ten '*Gunas*' in music viz. Rakta, Purna, Alankrita, Prasanna, Vyakta, Vikrushta, Slakshana, Sama, Sukumara, and Madhura. When 'Venu' (Flute), 'Veena' (stringed instrument) and Vocal are rendered together then that combination is known as Rakta or 'Ranjana'. Swara and *Shruti* (for eg. Kshobini Shruti in Shadaja, Tivra in Komala Rishabha, Dayavanti in Komala Gandharva, Prasarini in Tivra Madhyama, Alapini in Shuddha Dhaivataini in Komal Nishad) as also 'Chhanda' (Prosody) along with clear pronunciation are called 'Purna'; Alankrita denotes the Swara from the throat down to the place of heart and taking the sound up to the head; Prasanna emerges from kantha in 'gadgada' sound; Vyakta or clearly pronounced by the 'Pada'(letter), Padartha (material), vachana (eka or bahu / single or many) etc. When the sound is clear in high pitch and understood by the letters of Alphabet is Vikrushta; Slakshan is that Shriti which is devoid of either Dhruva or quick and Vilambita or elongated; Sama is that Shriti which normal by aspects without ups and downs; Sukumara Shruti is of soft nature and Madhura is sweet and sonorous. In regard to the *Swaras of Padas (letters)* there are eight varieties viz. Antodaatta (like Agnih in 'Agnirvritraani'), Adyudaatta (like Somah in Somah pavatey), Udaatta and Anudaatta respectively are like Pra and vah in the word 'Pra voyahvam'; Neecha Swarita is the word Veeryam in the expression 'Balam nyubjam veeryam'; Madhyadaatta like Havisha in the word 'Havishaa vidhema'; Swarita like Swaha in the expression 'Bhurbhuvah swaha' and

finally Dirudaatta as ‘V’kara and ‘spa’ in ‘Vanaspatih’. ‘*Adi Swaras*’ are three in number viz. Udatta (high tone), Anudatta (low tone) and Swarita (medium). The Swarita is known as ‘Swaar’ and there are seven Swaars viz. Jaatya, Kshepra, Abhinihit, Taira Vyanjana, Tiroviraama, Prashlishta and Paadavritta. [The wide range of Musical forms includes simple ‘Sarali’ (Easy to the beginners) with single or double digit variety like ‘S-R-G-M-P-D-N or SS-RR-GG-MM-PP-DD-NN; ‘Taara Sthayi’(elevated pitch); ‘Alankaram’ or musical ornamentation; ‘Geeta’ or simple musical forms; ‘Swarajati’ with complexes like Pallavi, Anupallavi and Charanam; Kritis or fulfilled singing; Varnam; Kirtana or lyrics; Kriti (higher form of singing); Ragamalika (garland of Raagas), Jaavali, Tillana and so on. [Select *Raagas* according to timings of day/ night: Before Sun rise- Bhoopaala, Bauli, Malayamaaruta; Early morning: Bilhari, Kedaram, Dhanyasi; before noon: Asavari, Saveri, Deva Manohari; Mid-day and later: Sri Ragam, Madhyamavati; before Evening: Mukhara, Begada; Evening: Vasanta, Purva Kalyani; Night: Neelambari, Kedaragoula; any time: Bhairavi, Kambhoji, Shankarabharanam or Kalyani.]

In respect of **Kalpa Grandha**: Kalpa comprises Nakshatra Kalpa, Veda Kalpa, Samhita Kalpa, Aangirasa Kalpa and Shanti Kalpa. In the Nakshatra Kalpa, there was a description of the Head of Stars, viz. Chandra as also of the notable Nakshatras. In Veda Kalpa, the methodology of achieving the ‘Purusharthas’ (Human Objectives) related to Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha was detailed. In Samhita Kalpa there was guidance to ‘Tatwa Darshi’ to Munis regarding the ‘Mantras’ about the Rishis, Chhandas and Devatas. In the Angirasa Kalpa, Lord Brahma himself was stated to have given the ‘Abhichara Vidhi Vidhana’ or of the procedures of magical / charms / benevolent or manevolent Karmas like Vashya, Mohana, Ucchhaatana and Unmaada. In the Shanti Kalpa, Mantras and Procedures to ward off dangers or to usher in Good Tidings from Celestial, Terrestrial or Extra-Terrestrial Sources are detailed. These Five Kalpas apart are Griha Kalpa or Homa Vidhanas, Abhishekas and Puja Vidhanas, including Mangal Snanas, ‘Ahutis’ or oblations to Agni and so on.

Then **Vyakarana Shastra** (Grammar) which constitutes ‘Veda Mukha’ or the Face of Vedas. Vibhaktis or Cases, Naamas , Sarva naamas, Samasas, Karakas, Taddhita Pratyayanta Shabdhas, Dhatus, Samasas and Karaka prakarana which amalgamates Vibhaktis and the process of amalgamation and so on.

Nirukta (Etymological or derived /rhetoric/artificial interpretations) which is basically an extension of Vyakarana seeks to bring out the hidden meaning of Vedas which apparently do not express the total intent and implication. The word ‘Nir’ connotes the comprehensive sense that is sought to be conveyed and ‘Ukta’ states that which is expressed, thus indicating that a lot more is to be revealed. As regards the Karna Rupa or the Ear-Forms of the ‘Vaidika Dhatus’, Nirukta is of five forms viz. ‘Aagama’, ‘Viparya’, ‘Vikara’, ‘Naasha’ and ‘Uttama Yog’. The Varna (Coverage or Classification) of Aagama signifies ‘Hamsa’ and the interchange of the word is ‘Simha’ which is the second formation of Varna called Viparya. Varna Viparya leads to Varna Vikara known as ‘Goodhotma’ or Goodha +Atma as in ‘Esha Sarveshu Bhuteshu Goodhotma na prakaashatey’. From Varna Vinasha is followed by ‘Prushodara’ or Prusha d+Udara. In the fifth form, Muni Sanandana explained to Narada that the words like ‘Bhramara’ indicated that deeper understanding of the Ruchas (Hymns) of Vedas was incomplete as a Bhramara had not tasted the full store of honey yet! It was not merely the grammatical correctness of the words, but their origin and context which were more significant. [*Satyameva artham aayayati gamayateeti Satyam* (That which imparts true knowledge about the existing objects is the ultimate Truth!). One who simply recites Vedas is like a ‘Sthanu’ (pillar).He who understood the words and the meaning would be a real source of happiness to self and guidance to others. *Artha vaachah Pushpam phalam* (Meaning of what is said is like the blossom and fruit!). The famed Yakshacharya, the author of Nirukta Text (800 AD approx) who followed the Grammarian Panini felt: *Naisha sthaanoraparaatho yadenamandho na pashyati, Purushaaraparaadham sa bhavati* (If a blind person were unable to vision a Pillar, it is not the fault of the pillar but of the blind person!

Chhandas Shastra: Maharshi Sanandana explained to Brahmarshi Narada about Chhandas Shastra which too is an important component of Vedangas; it is stated: *Chhandah paadow tu Vedasya* or Chhandas denotes the feet of Vedas. ‘Chhandas’ is of two types viz. ‘Vaidik’ or related to Vedas and

‘Loukik’ or for general use. Vaidik Chhanda expresses Gayatri Mantra: ‘Tatsavitur varenyam Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi Dhiyoyonah prachodayaat’. *Anushthup Yajati, Brihatya Gaayati, Gaayatrya stoutati*: Anushthup is used for Yagnas, Brihati Chhanda is for singing and Gayatri is used for Stutis. The Loukika chhanda is used in Puranas, Itihasaas, and Kavyas in poetical forms, for eg. *Sarva dharmaan parityajya maammekam sharanam vraja, Ahamtwa sarvapaapebhyo mokshamishyaami maa shuchah* (This Shloka is in Anushthup chhanda). Both the Vaidik and Loukik Chhandas have two kinds based on ‘Matras’ and ‘Varnas’ (units or quality) known as Martik and Varnik. The Chhanda Shastra comprises ‘Ganas’ (group of three Aksharas or letters) and Gurus / Laghus or Big and Small in terms of ‘S’ or ‘I’. The Ganas are as follows: 1) ‘Ya’ gana: ISS for eg. Ya+Maa+Taa; 2) ‘Ma’ gana: SSS for eg. Maa+Taa+Raa; 3) ‘Ta’ gana: SSI for eg. Taa+Raa+ Ja; 4) ‘Ra’ gana: SIS for eg. Raa+ Ja+Bhaa; 5) ‘Ja’ gana: ISI for eg. JA+ BHA+ Na; 6) ‘Bha’ gana: SII for eg. Bhaa+Na+ Sa; 7) ‘Na’ ganam: III for eg. Na+SA+La; 8) ‘Sa’ ganam: IIS for eg. Sa +La+ Gaah. To summarise, the following may be noted for facility: **YaMaaTaa (ISS), MaaTaa Raa (SSS), TaaRaaJa (SSI), Raa JaBhaa (SIS); JaBhaaNa (ISI), Bhaa Na Sa (SII), Na Sa La (III), Sa La Gah (IIS)**. The Ruling Deities of the Ganas as above are: Ya gana (Jala), Ma gana (Prithvi), Ta gana (Akash), Ra gana (Agni), Ja gana (Surya), Bha gana (Chandra), Na gana (‘Ayu’ or Life/ Health), Sa gana (Vayu). The ‘Phala’ or fruits / results are: Vriddhi or Abhyudaya / Growth or Progress in respect of Ya gana; Lakshmi/wealth for Ma gana; Dhana Naasha for Ta gana; Vinasha for Ra gana; Roga or ill-health for Ja gana; Su yasha for Bha gana; Ayu for Nagana and Bhramana or travel for Sa gana.

Jyotisha: In the Jyotisha Shastra, Skanda Maharshi emphasised: *Ganita (Siddhanta), Jaataka, Hora, and Samhita*. In Ganita there is Parikarma of Yoga, Antara, Gunana, Bhaajana, Varga, Vargamula, Ghana and Ghanamula; ways and means of finding Graha madhyama and clarity of positioning, ‘Anuyog’ or the Knowledge of Desha, Disha and Kaalamaan ie. Place, Direction and Time; Chandra Grahana, Surya Grahana, Udaya (Rise), Astama (Setting), Chhaadhikara (dusk), Chandra Shrugonnati or Dwiteeya’s Chandrodaya and Grahayuti (Graha’s Yoga). In the context of Jataka Skandha, description is given of Jaati Bheda (differences of Jaatis), Graha yoni or the details of Jaati, Rupa and Guna; Viniyonija (Janmaphala according to human beings), Garbhadaana, Janma, Arishta, Ayurdaaya or Life span, Dashaakrama or the details of Dashas, Karmaajeeva, Ashtaka Varga, Raja Yoga, Naabh sayoga, Chandra yoga, Pravrajyaa yoga, Rasi sheela, Anishta Yoga, Stree jaatakaphala, Mrityu vishay nirnaaya, Nashta-Janma-Vidhhaana etc. As regards Samhitya Skandha, details of Grahachara, Varsha Lakshana, Tithi, Dina, Nakshatra, Yoga, Karana, Muhurtha, UpaGraha, Surya Samkraanti, Graha gochara, Chandra bala / Taara bala, garbhadaana to Upanayana and Vivaha, Yatras, as also tatkaala vrishti gyan or of rainfall are described. Besides the aspects of Panchanga Sadhana, Grahana Sadhana and Dik Sadhana are discussed. Jataka Skanda relates to Raashi Phalas, Horas, , Navamsha Jnaana, Graha Kaalamaan, Graha Maitri, Nakshatra phalas, Raashi Janma Phalas, Graha Drishtis are covered too.

Nakshatra Phala (Star-wise birth results): Readings as per Nakshatra (Star)-wise birth of various human beings were narrated by Sanandana Maharshi to Narada Muni as follows: Those born in *Ashwini* are handsome and fond of wearing ornaments. *Bharani*-born are capable to perform and speak truthfully. *Krittika*-born tends to eatless, steady-minded, and conversational but have soft corner for other women. *Rohini* born are wealthy, *Mrigashitaites* are luxurious; *Ardra*-born violent, stubborn and criminal-minded; *Punarvasu* born are even-minded, and well behaved but suffer bad health; Persons born in *Pushya* Nakshatra are imaginative like Poets and are happy-go-lucky. Those persons who are born in *Aslesha* are rude, obstinate, ungrateful, low-minded and uncouth. *Magha* born are rich, devoted and happy. If born in *Purva Phalguni*, the persons are charitable, adjustable, sociable and conversationalists. Born of *Uttara Phalguni* are wealthy and comfortable. *Hasta* born are shameless, mean-minded and crooks. Persons born in *Chitra* are well dressed, beautiful and charming. *Swati* born are virtuous, moralistic, kind hearted and charitable. *Vishakhaites* are greedy, deceptive, cunning and harsh. Born of *Anuradha*, the persons are fond of travel and non-resident. *Jyeshtha* born are principled and contented. Persons born in *Mula Nakshatra* are wealthy, happy and helpful. If born of *Purvashadha and Uttarashadha*, the persons concerned are happy- go- lucky

and hearty /disciplined and virtuous respectively. *Shravanites* are rich, happy and famous; while born of *Dhanishta*, the persons concerned are donors, wealthy and courageous. A person born of *Shatabhisha*, the persons win over opponents but are susceptible of bad practices. Born of *Purvabhadra*, the persons concerned are heavily prone to feminine influence and rich; while *Uttarabhadraites* are independent, assertive, speech-makers, attractive and joyful. Finally, those born in *Revati* are energetic, enterprising, rich and pure-hearted.

Meshaadi Chandra Raashi Janma Phala: Those born in *Mesha Raashi* are passionate, enterprising and grateful; *Vrisha Raasi*: Charming, charity-minded and tolerant; *Mithun Raashai*: Comfort-loving and diplomatic; *Karka Raashi*: Controlled by opposite sex and short statured; *Simha Raashi*: Egoistic, enterprising, stable-minded and comfort-oriented; *Kanya Raashi*: Soft-natured, virtuous and well-meaning; *Tula Raashi*: Learned, broad-minded and wealthy; *Vrischika Raashi*: Loka Pujya, unhealthy and injury-prone; *Dhanu Raashi*: Poets, Architects, Artistic and wealthy; *Makara Raashi*: Unenthusiastic to perform, wasteful, vagabond but attractive; *Kumbha Raashi*: Desirous of possessing 'Para Stree' and 'Para Dhan'; and *Meena Raashi*: Artistic, dreamy and easy-loving.

To conclude this section of Brahmarshi Narada's magnificent heights of Knowledge that he was able to acquire is indeed noteworthy as camouflaged his style of conduct and demeanour much among those who tend to get amused with his seemingly comic statements and actions.

Narada's Ultimate Vision of the Unique Bliss!

As Narada approached Sanatkumara to teach him about the Unity of the Self with Existence, the latter asked Narada to first describe as to what all was learnt heretofore so that he could then deduce as to how other things of inferiority to Existence were known and what kind of vision was required in the context. The Kumara further desired to ascertain as to what level of understanding Narada had to define the Supreme Reality called Infinity, for instance like showing the Moon on the branch of a tree to a child through the leaves of a near by tree! Indeed knowledge of the Self would be in the realms of the possibility only when seeking to locate the best goal of life! Then Narada narrated that he read Rik-Yajur-Saama-Atharvana Vedas, Itihasa Puranas as the Fifth Veda, Vyakarana, Rites for the Pitru ganas, Ganita, Astrology and Astronomy, Natural Sciences, Menerology, Logic, Sciences of Archery, Military Tactics, Science of Poison Cure, Fine Arts of Music, Poetry, Dance and of Sounds! But Narada confessed that he had only textual knowledge except a few of practical applications. Even what all he learnt was by way of subjects and names and that his objective was specific viz. know of Self beyond sorrow and that his request too was specific viz. To take him beyond sorrow to Eternal Bliss! Sanat Kumara replied that indeed what all he acquired was by way of titles of texts and of learning, but the real learning was far more specific namely meditation on an Image, indeed that of Vishnu who was Unknown, being 'Avyaktam Shasvatam Vishnum Anantam Ajam Avyayam'! Any one who meditates on the name of that Reality called, say, Brahman, would acquire freedom of barriers of space, time, distance and knowledge! Now, a systematic analysis of natural features and their magnificence vis a vis the supreme self is attempted step by step like the power of Speech, the might of Mind, the strength of will and thought and the effectiveness of prayers and concentration to discover Brahman!

While explaining to Narada, Sanatkumara prefaced that **Speech** is most certainly far more significant than being a mere name of a particular regulation of thought, be it Vedas, Itihasa Puranas, or several other

media of expression and the deep and endless mine of disciplines that Narada mentioned about ranging from truths and untruth, good and bad, pleasant and unpleasant. If there is no speech, there would be no knowledge, thought, fact, reality or otherwise or truth and falsehood, thus making the line of distinction too thin and vague as distinct among humans from an animal, bird or an insect! Hence Knowledge and Virtue are the very fundamentals of Existence and so is the expression of that fund of awareness as in the medium of Speech that occupies primacy to realise what Brahman is all about! Those who meditate Speech as Brahman thus acquire freedom of expression about him and vindicate our realisation of Him for sure!

Sanatkumara then stated that while knowledge and speech were important no doubt, but **Mind** and its clarity signifying maturity of judgment would be in fact be of greater consequence. Mind being an internal organ would be a tested companion and like two juicy fruits of speech and mind would further add to double power of meditation. For example knowledge and speech coupled with thinking and discretion would have double advantage to chant mantras, to perform rites, to take up tasks and accomplish fruits of success! This is how meditation of Brahman by utilising mind becomes doubly constructive and fruitful!

Even if one's knowledge base is strong and his Vaak or speech be of impeccable quality, his mind is to be attuned enough to seek Brahman, his **Sankalpa** or determined 'Will' would need to be fine-tuned in an effort to seek Brahman! A firm will power is indeed very significant while inclination, capability to recite the Mantras and perform Rites as backed up by comprehension of the empirical data are essential too. Indeed application of appropriate Mantras to the Rites as aimed at is no mean task any way, but as is said the horse has to be taken to the tub of water and more importantly would have to be made to drink! Thus the where-with-all being in perfect placement, meditation being a highly subjective motivation, has to emerge by buttressed Sankalpa! No doubt, he who meditates on Brahman would attain the world of Truth and Lasting Joy but the Sankalpa has to be reinforced!

Having made the Sankalpa or a firm decision, then the **perseverance** and staying power of what has been resolved would be the sustenance that needs to be followed up; the chitta or the intelligence to hold despite obstacles is thus superior to the will. As one deserves and desires, he wills, decides and ascertains as how to give a practical shape to the realisation of the goal; in the process he resorts to think, propel the organ of speech to utter mantras and perform the rites. It is possible that there might be shortcomings and the application of intelligence would need to be supplemented from other sources; in other words, one needs to meditate on the thought process and wherever felt necessary make amendments as rigidities should be softened. Indeed, all possible omissions and commissions in the approach be incorporated and the modus operandi be revised as felt needed on a dynamic graph. The proverb states that most of the sections of the Society never even launch a project as they are basically diffident and know of their limitations; some handful of these do launch the project but as several hindrances crop up somewhere on way give up as tension overtakes their strong-enough will; but those very very few in millions face all the obstacles and finally reach the goal dropping many on the sideways! All these actions of perseverance emerge from thought and practical application of intelligence! Thus he who may be literally solitary to seek Brahman ought to contemplate and reflect deeply on intelligence in the form of Will Power to attain the absolute and unqualified world of Brahman as far as Will Power prevails!

Dhyanam or meditation is more effective than the consideration of Will Power since after all the Self Determination has to pave way for Meditation. The process of meditation to Brahman is not a simple task! Primarily, one has to conquer the material world centering the Earth. Then the contemplation needs to surmount 'Dyauh' or the Intermediate Space. It is not an easy task to overcome the pulls and pressures of the Swarga by 'dhyana'. Then meditation of the glory of water and the high mountains needs to be prevailed upon. Then comes yet another intensity of humanity and divinity which has such a strong pull that is simply unimaginable and that complexity of that tough intensity is a near impossibility! Those among human beings who had already scaled the dizzy elevations and summits of glory in the pursuit of Brahman are not only few and far between but even of the stature of Naradas and Maharshis slip down the valleys of failures out of jealousies and pettinesses. Such situations abound when meditation becomes warranted against pinnacles of meditation! It is stated that he who meditates on Meditation, he who is identified with what Meditation is all about, he attains freedom of movement of thought, action and deed; and he who is identified with meditation is indeed the Reality of Meditation itself!

Reverting back to basics, Sanat Kumara did appreciate the fund of extraordinary Vigjnaana of Brahmaarshi Narada, which indeed was the breaking point of the quest of Brahman! Indeed, dhyanam or contemplation is possible on the strength of knowledge and **enlightenment!** Knowledge is amassing huge funds of empirical information and facts, while Vijnanam is the capacity for assimilation and understanding which is the bottom of **Critical Analysis!** Now, he who meditates on such deep and close assessment of Brahman, might be able to understand the range and depth of Brahman! But alas, none is sure to gauge the range and depth of Brahman as the proverbial origin and depth of Shiva Linga remains enigmatic! He who meditates Brahman might have a hope on the understanding of what kind of Truth that he is!

Mentally and psychologically ready with outstanding back up of knowledge, excellent capability of Vaak Shakti or command of speech, determination and will power, capacity of meditation and enlightenment, Sanat Kumara emphasised to Narada, that a person of full equipment to realise Brahman should be physically strong too and possess optimal **strength** which most certainly could not be dispensed with! Strength is far superior to Vigjnaana or Enlightenment and a strong person by his very physical appearance would stand out among hundreds of others and any person of similar capabilities should indeed be an ideal observer, hearer, visioner, thinker, performer and a man of exceptional Understanding and Enlightenment! It is stated that one's Vijnana or Enlightened Understanding overcomes Antariksha and Swarga on the celestial side then he on the earthly plane overakes the fabulous heights of parvatas, Gods and human beings, animals of cruelty and ferocity, birds and reptiles, water based species, trees, insects, flies and ants. He who meditates on his strength based on muscle and might must by all means be esteemed as the right candidate with all the erstwhile qualifications to seek Brahman as he rises above all as the best observer, careful listener, rational thinker, a visioner, performer and the unmistakable deliverer of Brahma Tatwa!

Now how is strength derived as quite obviously, **Food** is not only the source but is certainly far superior to strength! In case a person abstains from food for ten nights and still survives, it would be a wonder that he is able to see, hear, think, understand and perform. Once the food barrier is crossed, he could see, hear, think, understand, and perform! That is precisely why food is to be worshipped and deeply meditated to! Indeed Brahman sustains life from humans downward lest very existence is at stake otherwise. He who

meditates on food as Brahman himself attains the worlds which is full of food and also its associate and even superior to it viz. water!

On a comparative analysis, **Water** is superior for two reasons: a person can survive with water for a more days than without food; also when there is lack of plentiful rainfall, then persons state in anguish that food would be scarce now. When there is good rain fall, public would feel happy that food would be plentiful. In extreme cases then there is too much of rain and floods spoil standing crops, public would get alarmed too, due to bad prospects of food. Indeed water is far more crucial than food. Water as truly meditation worthy as it takes all forms on earth, intermediate space, in heaven, on mountains, where gods or humans, animals and birds, grass, trees, fish, worms, and even ants exist and survive on! Indeed, existence of all Beings depends squarely on water , since there is water there is joy, contentment and all round fulfillment for one and all in the Creation of Brahman!

Tejas or heat caused by Fire is far more noteworthy than water in the universe also heating up the Antariksha or the intermediate space supported by Vayu /Air. When it is said that the atmosphere is heating up then the indication is that it is going to rain and that is how heat and radiation would lead to water. Fire taking to the form of thunders travels with flashes of lightnings and together they lead to rains. Thus one needs to basically meditate to Tejas or Fire when it is said that the worlds too get brilliant and bright destroying darkness and dullness and that is what the basic Reality is and Brahman is!

Indeed among the Pancha Bhutas or Five Elements, viz. Prithivi, Aapas, Tejas, Vaayu and **Aakaasha** or Earth-Water-Agni-Air and the **Sky**, the last but not the least is the Sky undoubtedly as it holds the Surya, Chandra, Nakshatraas, Vidyut or Lightnings, and Agni in position. All the activities in the Universe including the Sapta Lokas of Bhu-Bhuvah-Swar-Mahar-Janar-Tapas and Brahma Lokas are performed, seen, heard, enjoyed by the medium of Akasha; Dasa Dishas or Ten directions witness the activities by Akasha; Astha Loka Palakas of Indra-Agni-Yama-Nirriti-Varuna- Vaayu-Kebera and Ishana are active only by the courtesy of Aakasha; births and deaths of Souls are facilitated by Aaksaha; growth and decadence are effected and visioned by Akasha; indeed Aakasha is the unique witness of activities of shrotra, chakshu, vaak, twak, and reproduction! Indeed there is no existence possible without the Sky! One needs therefore to meditate Akasha as Brahman himself!

Having stated that among the Pancha Bhutas , Akaasha has a unique role in the quest of Brahman, Sanat Kumara made a distinction of Space among the Pancha Bhutas in the macro context, and though strictly not comparable, referred to another significant aspect of the **Memory Power** in the personal context. His memory power would occupy a high priority in the attainment of the Absolute Truth called Brahman, since all the faculties of a human being like seeing, hearing, thinking, would all be on one side and the singular capacity of Memory is on the other. Once the memory is strong, one's own capability to hear, think, observe, analyse and so on is facilitated! That is why the need for meditation on memory as Brahman!)

Aasha or Hope is the spring of human life and even those who have been successively disillusioned in life have a ray of hope that one day he or she would witness improvements! In fact hope seeks to forget memories or ignore dark patches and rouse hope again! Moreover, good memories if sustained, provide inspiration and help memorise Mantras, prayers, rites, and so on while bad memories act as precautions and motivate fresh bouts of hope to perform better! Hope wishes for prosperity, good progeny and all

round success and fame! Thus indeed meditate on hope. Whoever meditates on hope as Brahman would secure freedom of movement as far as and as much as hope prevails and sustains!

Praana the Life Energy supercedes Hope and Optimism. It is **the Conscious Self** called 'Pragjnaatma' or the Individual Self which is as significant to one's own near and dear, say like the parents, brothers and sisters, teachers or a learned Brahmanas. If one ceases to esteem one of these lovednes, then it is stated that he had no Praana or scruples and compunction and that he was unworthy of his existence! As and when such a person is dead, then none has pity for him and out of spite and latent hatred, one would not even mind to shove his body and bones into fire with disgust murmuring that the departed one deserved no mercy and consideration. That indeed is the power of Praana or the Life Breath when persons of virtue are gone, there would be spontaneous feelings of sorrow, admiration of the departed one and of genuine disinterest and despondency lingering at each and every memory of his, his qualities of speech or other abilities, genuine goodness and justifiable name and fame. By narrating this, Narada was presumably able to attempt to excel be it in his art of speech, conviction, identification with external elements and their unification with his Pragjnaatma or the Individual self; he appeared perhaps sensitised Sanatkumara by way of step by step elevation of the Self towards an ordeal to realise Brahman the Truth from gaining knowledge to Sankalpa to meditation to befriending 'Pancha Bhutas' to cleansing Praana and wondered as to what other inputs might still be required to seek the Truth! Would not Praana or the Vital Force be the final step indeed! Sanat Kumara smiled and expressed that Narada was yet to measure further distances as Truth appeared elusive further! Then Narada defines that his greatest endeavour to discover the **Absolute Truth** would indeed not so much of speech, vital force, food etc but .referred to Sanatkumara's earliet remark that Truth was elusive! He affirmed therefore that his greatest endeavour was to realise Truth the Infinite! Narada once again underlined that he mentioned of realising the Truth as it indeed was the Most Absolute Truth beyond all the frontiers of speech, praana, elements and so forth! He further stated that he was not one of those who said that he understood Truth; also some stated that they did not understand what in fact understanding actually meant. It was in this dilemma that one needed to understand the understanding. Indeed his major desire was to understand what indeed was worth understanding! If a person really thinks and deliberates deeply enough, then he understands effectively; contrarily when he thinks superficially his understanding would be likewise! Therefore one must have the real yearning for understanding; Brahmarshi Narada confessed that he desired understanding intensely! Now, when his thinking was profound, it would beget faith and only when he had faith then he would think deeper. One ought to therefore desire to reflect with faith. The Maharshi then expressed his resolve that by all means he would seek and sincerely pursue faith with conviction to realise Truth!

Nishtha or Commitmen and **Karyaacharana** or Involved Activity of Service leads to fullfillment;_When there is commitment and dedication, that precedes faith; in the absence of faith there cannot be commitment. One attains faith by service with devotion. It is indeed devotion only that one needs to acquire. Now, when 'Yadaa vai karoti' or when one acts or takes action, that presupposes control of senses and practice of mental control or concentration. Once that kind of focussed deliberation is secured, devoted service and 'nishkaama karana' or sercice without expectation becomes possible. That indeed the seed of happiness in the real spiritual way!

Thus pursuant to such fulfillment , Narada entreated Sanatkumara to bless him for the joy of Infinity and Eternity. *Yadaa vai sukham labhatetha karoti, naasukham labdhvaa karoti sukham eve labdhvaakaroti sukham tveva vijijnaasitavyam iti; sukham, Bhagavah, vijijnaasa iti// Sa vai bhumaa tat sukham, naalpe*

sukham asti, bhumaiva sukham; bhumaa tveva vijijnaasitavya iti; bhumaanaam, Bhagavah, vijijnaasaa iti/ (Chhandogya Upanishad VII.xxii.1 and VII.xxiii.1) (As one acts and performs dynamic service firmly embedded in total dedication, then that bestows ‘sukham’ or enjoyment; indeed there cannot be such happiness without dedicated service backed up by ‘nishtha’ and ‘shraddha’. This happiness is certainly not in reference to maerial context, which is tantamount to endless craving and flimsily fleeting! The joy that is under reference is most hard-earned as a result of a long chain of variables strating from speech enabled by strong knowledge of appropriate nature, clean mind, strong will, thought, meditation, understanding, physical energy based up by good food and water of suitable heat and relief space, good memory, aspiration, vital energy, truthfulness, thinking capacity and mental sharpness, faith, determination, nishkama karma! Indeed it was that kind of Happiness that Narada aspired for! He specifically referred to : Yo vai bhumaa tat sukham aalpe sukhamatsi bhumaiva sukham bhumaa tyeva vijijnaasitavya iti! Narada specifically aimed at That joy which is truly endless and Infinite!) Now, the definition of Infinity would mean such that where one would not be able to see, hear, feel and understand any thing. In the situation of the Self and the Infinity get united or as both are the reflections of each other, whom should one see, hear, feel or understand! Brihadaranyaka Upanishad is quoted in this context vide Bridadaranyaka Upanishad.II.iv.14: ‘As Maitreyi got enlightened, she got confused and told Yagjnyavalkya so and the latter explained to her: ‘Yatra hi dvaitamiva bhavati taditara itaram jighnati,taditara itaram pashyati, taditara itaram shrunoti, taditara itaramabhivadati, taditara itaram manute, taditara itaram vijaaneeti; yatra vaa aya sarvamaatmaivaa bhutatkena kam jighnet, tatkena kam pashyet, tatkena kam shrunuyaat, tatkena kamabhivadet, tatkena kam manveet, tatkena kam vijaaneeyat? Yenedam sarvam vijaanati tam kena vijaaneeyat? Vijnataaramare kena vijneeyaaditi? In other words, when there is duality, then one smells,sees, hears,speaks thinks and knows differently. But now when Brahman and Self are just the same, then what should one smell, hear, speak, think, know, see,through what! This is because both are just the same: ‘Through what should one know That owing to which all this is known-through what, o Maitreyi, shouldone know the Knower?’ Thus Sanat Kumara explained to Narada that which indeed was the Infinite was Immortal while that which was finite was mortal! He further explained that in the mortal world, one’s glory comprised cows, horses, elephants, gold, servants, women, fields and houses. Then how indeed would one guess that Infinity and its glory could be measured! The reply was that Infinity was immesurable and has no parallels!

That Brahman or Truth is nowhere else but the Self of all! Brahman is omnipresent as he is below, above, behind, in front; in South, in North and is indeed all this. Hence His instruction that is not only Infinite but is also in everything from Brahma the Creator of the Universe to a piece of grass. Hence He is indeed the Individual Soul the Antaratma. Hence the further instruction that the Self is below, above, behind, in front, in all the Directions. Anyone who looks within has seen Him as he is one’s mirror image! He is free of movement, speech, thought, vision, hearing and touch. The concept of duality is totally misplaced. This is so but for the interaction of the Jnanendriyas and karmendriyas or the body parts and the sensory organs.Mortality is for the body and never ever for the Soul and indeed that is the Eternal Truth.

Finally, Sanatkumara sums up to Narada and provides the final Upadesha or his Spiritual Instruction :*Tasya havaa etasyaivam pashyatah, evam manvaanasya, evam vijaanata atmaah praanah, atmaa aashaa, atmaah smaraha, atmataakaashah, atmaastejah, atmaapah, atmaa aavirbhaava- tirobhavau atmatonnam, aatamato balam, aamtmo vijnaanam, atmato dhyaanam, atmaschittam, atmatah sankalpah,aatmato manah, aatmo vaak atmo naama, aatmato mantrah, atmaani karmaani aatata evedam sarvam iti// Tad esha shloka:na pasho mriyumu pashyati, na rogam notadukkhataam,Sarvam ha pashyah*

pashyati, Sarvam aapnoti sarvashah iti// Sa ekadhaa bhavati, tridhaa bhavati, panaachadhaa saptadhaa navadhaa chiva punaschaik -aadasha smritah, shatam cha dashachaikascha sahasraani cha vimshatih aahaara-shuddausattva-shuddhih, sattva-shuddhau dhruva smritih, smritilambhe sarva grabndhinaam vipramokshah; tasmaimridita kahaayaaya taasah param darshayati bhagavaan sanakkumaaraah: tam skanda ii aachakshate, tam skanda iti aachakshate/ (Chhandogya Upanishad vide VII.xxvi.1-2) (Once any person believes and gets convinced that he - or any Individual Self for that matter -happens to be the spring boat of the Praana, hope, memory, space, water, form and look, strength, food, reasoning and intelligence, mental power, speech, knowledge, rites and all such abilities, then indeed that Self himself or each and every Self like himself, is certainly, nay undoubtedly, the Supreme Self himself with all the accomplishments listed and such as those which are even dormant in him but capable of! In this connection a Stanza with considerable hidden meaning has been described; it states: ‘The definition of one who accomplished Realisation of Truth is free from grief, illness and death; he can foresee each and everything and attain what he desires. He originally becomes one, then three fold-say Tri Gunas and five fold-say pancha bhutas, seven fold say Sapta Dvipas or Samudras, and nine fold, say Nava Grahas; he is called eleven say Ekaadasha Rudras, or one hundred and ten and one thousand and twenty and so on! He is a symbol of Purity, purity of food, nature, memory, heart, thought, and action. Then Sanatkumara pointed to Narada about spiritual freedom to escape from darkness, impurities of ignorance, attachment to desire and to speed up the bandwagon of knowledge, mind, thought, resolve, meditation and introspection to discover Truth finally as Himself! Once that stage is reached, then he becomes ‘Bhagavan’ or God like and He knows the source and cause of Existence, its termination, the entries and exits, as also the knowledge and ignorance of Reality. Brahmarshi Narada had that conviction of Sanatkumara being a Bhagavan and hence approached him for guidance and thus the latter titled himself as Skanda, like Lord Kartika Himself!)

Conclusion

The multi-splendoured personality of Narada is perceivable perhaps only in idealism. He is not merely a concept which sparkles in ‘Srishti’, but at once as a provocateur, corrector, guide, and a bridge to vice and virtue. He is a true reflection of what is, what has been, what should not be and what ought to be. He is a mix of Tri Gunas of Satwa-Rajas-Tamas in the required proportion. He has access to Tri-Lokas to their extreme limits. Indeed every man and woman has some thing of a Narada in one’s psyche but that flippancy or childlike carelessness needs to be harnessed with knowledge, worldly wisdom, practicality, extreme devotion and that most precious milk of human kindness!

OM Namo Bhagavate Vaasudevaaya!